

Third Session - Fortieth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James, Hon.	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	NDP
CHIEF, Kevin, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	NDP
CROTHERS, Deanne	St. James	NDP
CULLEN, Cliff	Spruce Woods	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FRIESEN, Cameron	Morden-Winkler	PC
GAUDREAU, Dave	St. Norbert	NDP
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Liberal
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Richmond	NDP
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	NDP
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Swan River	NDP
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	Dawson Trail	NDP
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MELNICK, Christine	Riel	Ind.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	NDP
PALLISTER, Brian	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PETTERSEN, Clarence	Flin Flon	NDP
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REID, Daryl, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Kewatinook	NDP
RONDEAU, Jim	Assiniboia	NDP
ROWAT, Leanne	Riding Mountain	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	St. Paul	PC
SELBY, Erin, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	NDP
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 16, 2014

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom and know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 52—The Non-Smokers Health Protection
Amendment Act (Prohibitions on Flavoured
Tobacco and Other Amendments)**

Hon. Sharon Blady (Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the minister, Children and Youth Opportunities, that Bill 52, The Non-Smokers Health Protection Amendment Act (Prohibitions on Flavoured Tobacco and Other Amendments); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection de la santé des non-fumeurs (interdiction visant le tabac aromatisé et autres modifications), be now read a first time and be ordered for second reading immediately.

Motion presented.

Ms. Blady: Mr. Speaker, this legislation closes a gap in federal legislation regarding the sale of flavoured tobacco, especially those flavours that are marketed towards youth.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Any further introduction of bills?

PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, we'll move on to petitions.

**Beausejour District Hospital—
Weekend and Holiday Physician Availability**

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The Beausejour District Hospital is a 30-bed, acute-care facility that serves the communities of Beausejour and Brokenhead.

(2) The hospital and the primary-care centre have had no doctor available on weekends and holidays for many months, jeopardizing the health and livelihoods of those in northeast region of the Interlake-East Regional Health Authority.

(3) During the 2011 election, the provincial government promised to provide every Manitoban with access to a family doctor by 2015.

(4) This promise is far from being realized, and Manitobans are witnessing many emergency rooms limiting services or closing temporarily, with the majority of these reductions taking place in rural Manitoba.

(5) According to the Health Council of Canada, only 25 per cent of doctors in Manitoba reported that their patients had access to care on evenings and weekends.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government and the Minister of Health to ensure that the Beausejour District Hospital and primary-care centre have a primary-care physician available on weekends and holidays to better provide area residents with this essential service.

This petition is signed by D. Chura, C. Zillman, L. Litke and many, many more fine Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: In keeping with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to have been received by the House.

Further petitions?

**Provincial Sales Tax Increase—
Effects on Manitoba Economy**

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background for this petition is as follows:

(1) The Premier of Manitoba is on record calling the idea of a hike in the PST ridiculous.

(2) Economists calculate that the PST hike has cost the average family \$437 more in taxes after only six months.

(3) Seventy-five per cent of small businesses in Manitoba agree that provincial sales taxes are discouraging them from growing their businesses.

(4) The Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association estimates that a 1 per cent increase in the PST will result in job—a loss to the economy of \$42 million and threaten hundreds of jobs in that sector.

(5) Partly due to the PST, overall taxes on new investment in Manitoba recently stood at 26.3 per cent whereas in Alberta the rate was 16.2 per cent and the Ontario rate was 17.9 per cent, according to the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce.

(6) The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce are concerned that the PST hike will make an already uncompetitive tax framework even more unattractive to job creators in the province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to reverse the job-killing PST increase.

(2) To increase the provincial—to urge the provincial government to restore the right of Manitobans to reject or approve any increases to the PST through a referendum.

This petition is submitted on behalf of M. Abrahams, T. Tarrant, E. Tarrant and many other fine Manitobans.

**Provincial Sales Tax Increase—
Reversal and Referendum Rights**

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to the petition is as follows:

(1) The Balanced Budget, Fiscal Management and Taxpayer Accountability Act is a law that guarantees Manitobans the right to vote in a referendum to either approve or reject increases to the PST and other taxes.

(2) Despite the fact that the right to vote is enshrined in this legislation, the provincial government hiked the PST to 8 per cent as of July 1st, 2013.

(3) The Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba has asked the courts to rule on whether or not the provincial government broke the law by failing to address the referendum requirement before imposing the PST tax increase on Manitoban families.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to reverse the PST increase.

(2) To urge the provincial government to restore the right of Manitobans to vote in a referendum on increases to the PST.

This petition is signed by M. Jamieson, B. Jewsbury, T. Drinkwater and many other fine Manitobans.

**Employment and Income Assistance—
Rental Allowance Increase**

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for the petition:

(1) The rental allowance for people on unemployment—or on employment and income assistance, EIA, in Manitoba has remained effectively flat for over 20 years, even while the cost of renting a home has steadily increased.

(2) Despite the many calls from the official opposition caucus, individuals and community groups, and despite the fact that the very same recommendation was made in the final report of the inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the death of Phoenix Sinclair, the provincial government has failed to protect the most vulnerable Manitobans by refusing to raise the rental rate portion of employment and income insurance—assistance to 75 per cent of the median market rents.

* (13:40)

(3) Fewer dollars to use for rent forces Manitobans receiving EIA to live in substandard, overcrowded and unsafe conditions.

(4) Fewer dollars available for EIA recipients to rent safe and hygienic housing means increased pressure on the food banks, the health-care system and other services, as Manitoba families have to divert money for food and other critical necessities to pay for rent.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government and the Minister of Jobs and Economy to increase the rental allowance to EIA recipients to 75 per cent of the median market rent so that EIA recipients can secure clean, safe and affordable housing without sacrificing other necessities such as food and medical expenses.

And this petition is signed by A. Stoesz, W. Friesen, C. Doell and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Hydro Capital Development—NFAT Review

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Manitoba Hydro was mandated by the provincial government to commence a \$21-billion capital development plan to service uncertain electricity export markets.

In the last five years, competition from alternative energy sources is decreasing the price and demand for Manitoba's hydroelectricity and causing the financial viability of this capital plan to be questioned.

The \$21-billion capital plan requires Manitoba Hydro to increase domestic electricity rates by up to 4 per cent annually for the next 20 years and possibly more if export opportunities fail to materialize.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge that the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro create a complete and transparent needs-for-and-alternatives-to review of Manitoba Hydro's total capital development plan to ensure the financial viability of Manitoba Hydro.

And this petition is signed by D. Laudin, J. Kaminsky, W. Kaminsky and many more fine Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase— Reversal and Referendum Rights

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to the petition is as follows:

(1) The Balanced Budget, Fiscal Management and Taxpayer Accountability Act is a law that guarantees Manitobans the right to vote in a referendum to either approve or reject increases to the PST and other taxes.

(2) Despite the fact that the right to vote is enshrined in this legislation, the provincial government hiked the PST to 8 per cent as of July 1st, 2013.

(3) The Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba has asked the courts to rule on whether or not the government broke the law failing to address the referendum requirement before imposing the PST tax increase on Manitoba families.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to reverse the PST increase.

(2) To urge the provincial government to restore the right of Manitobans to vote in a referendum on increases to the PST.

This petition is signed by L. Woywoda, J. Wolanski, D. Catellier and many more fine Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Any further petitions? Seeing none, we'll move on to committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): On behalf of the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson), I am pleased to table the Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Supplementary Information for Legislative Review 2014-2015 Departmental Expenditure Estimates.

Mr. Speaker: Any further tabling of reports?

Hon. Erna Braun (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to

table the Manitoba Labour and Immigration Supplementary Information for Legislative Review 2014-2015 Departmental Expenditure Estimates.

Mr. Speaker: Any further tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Prior to me recognizing the guests, I want to draw the attention of honourable members. It was an oversight on my part when I called for the introduction of bills, and I had the wrong script and I wanted to make sure that the record accurately reflected what the intent was.

And so I'd like to, with respect to the Minister of Healthy Living's bill that she introduced, I want to put on the record that the honourable—it's been moved by the honourable Minister of Healthy Living, seconded by the honourable Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities (Mr. Chief), that Bill 52, The Non-Smokers Health Protection Amendment Act (Prohibitions on Flavoured Tobacco and Other Amendments), be now read for a first time, contrary to what I had said earlier with respect to being called immediately for the second reading.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt that motion? *[Agreed]*

Thank you for allowing me to correct the record.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: I'm going to introduce guests. We have a number of guests with us here this afternoon.

And I'd like to draw the attention to honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us from Chief Peguis Junior High 25 grade 9 students under the direction of Bailey McIntyre and Jordon Yvon-Moreau, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson).

On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

And also seated in the public gallery we have today from Island Lakes Community School 24 grade 4 and 5 students under the direction of Ms. Clare Dutka, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Health (Ms. Selby).

On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

And also seated in the public gallery we have with us today members from the Council of Women of Winnipeg, including the council president, Kelly-Ann Stevenson, who are the guests of the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Crothers).

On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon as well.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Political Parties Public Financing

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, the government hasn't been at all reticent about promoting its spending, and it's certainly, in respect of the PST hike, tried to sell Manitobans that it's doing great things as it prances around the province cutting ribbons and running with scissors as a result.

Perhaps the Premier could explain. You know, I asked him several times the other day to share with us how much his party was taking in vote tax, and, obviously, that would be part of the reason for raising the PST, and he didn't want to disclose that. He seems embarrassed or somewhat ashamed about spending money on his own party, and perhaps that's justified; certainly, we think so.

So I'll ask him again today if he'd share with the House: How much, in fact, is his party taking as an unearned subsidy in vote tax?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, this is the second province in Canada to ban corporate and union donations as being excluded from the political process, and we in this side of the House believe in public financing for democracy. That puts limits on big money being able to call the shots and how the democracy of this province, how citizens can influence government. Public financing allows everybody to have a say in how their democracy will function on their behalf. I know the members don't like it when we limit the impact of big money on this province. We think it's reasonable. The Legislature has passed that legislation, and we will continue to support public financing.

I note the member opposite, when he was a member of the federal Parliament, received over \$200,000—\$200,000. If he really is opposed to that, when will he rebate that \$200,000?

Mr. Pallister: Well, I did better than that. I was part of a government that reduced and is going to

eliminate the vote tax. So I'm particularly proud of myself: principles and respect.

It's interesting how the Premier's defence of this unnecessary and unearned subsidy began not in the early years of this millennium when his party was outfundraising the other party, this party that I lead, but rather only after their fundraising began to fall below this party's level. So much for principle.

Now, this is a province in which teachers have been fired, child-care workers have had their salaries arbitrarily reduced by this government, and wait times are growing and longer for ambulances. And yet, is the top priority of this government education or child care or health care? No, it is not.

* (13:50)

In actual fact, its top priority—and I'd like the Premier to admit this while he shares with us the exact amount of the subsidy he's taking—that his top priority is his own party and himself.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, unlike when the Leader of the Opposition was in government and 700 teachers were eliminated, we have added over 250 teachers in the grades 1, 2 and 3 to reduce class sizes, over 250 more teachers, voted against by every member of the opposition every single time we've expanded those resources.

And we've expanded education funding again this year to keep class sizes small, to provide the kind of supports that will allow young students have a very positive start on the basics in Manitoba: reading, writing, the kind of skills necessary to get along in the world.

Daycare, the member opposite was a part of the federal government that eliminated a national daycare program for this country. We have put more money into daycare. The number of additional spaces in Manitoba is up 12,000. And daycare workers, not only have they seen their salaries increase from around 19, 20 thousand a year to well over \$32,000 a year, but we are the second province that's brought in a pension plan for daycare workers in Manitoba.

Mr. Pallister: And those same daycare workers and teachers were promised by this Premier that they would not see a PST hike and, in fact, he decimated their household incomes with his misbegotten activities since being elected. That's a reality.

You know, the Premier has, well understood by Manitobans, including civil servants across this great

province, that the Premier sold his integrity for 1 per cent. And he's desperate, I know, to prop up his support.

So he takes a vote tax and won't tell Manitobans how much it is. He's had repeated opportunities to do so, but he covers it up. But we all know that that vote tax went to buy attack ads, and that's wonderful for the Premier, I guess, because they seem to have worked. I believe they gave him a blip in the polls of 1 per cent.

So there you go. He's had—he's sold his integrity not once for 1 per cent but twice for 1 per cent.

So I'm going to ask him again. I'm going to ask him one more time to share with Manitobans how much of their money he's taking to spend on his party.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, this question from an individual that said he would never privatize the telephone system and then promptly privatized the telephone system with all of the benefits going to private individuals, many of whom do not even live in Manitoba. The rates went from the third lowest in Canada to the third highest.

Our commitment to infrastructure was identified by Manitobans as their top priority. They want to see an investment in good infrastructure, flood protection for Manitoba communities, better roads, better highways, better investments in the kind of infrastructure that keeps communities safe. And we have followed up on that with a program that will generate 58,900 good jobs in the province of Manitoba, good opportunities for young people, better productivity in our economy, a \$6.3-billion lift in our economy.

Good jobs for young people, stronger infrastructure and a stronger economy, and the member opposite has no plan for the future of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

Manitoba Hydro Development Domestic Power Needs—Foreign Markets

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): And the only elected government in the country of Canada that ran on a promise not to raise the PST and then raised the PST, Mr. Speaker. This is credibility, and a credibility gap exists on that side of the House when it comes to this Premier.

Now, just this week again, his Hydro Minister, and the Premier reiterates it, says—threatens Manitobans, says we'll freeze in the dark. We'll freeze in the dark by the end of the decade if we don't have new hydro.

But no expert testimony whatsoever at the PUB supports this thesis. In fact, the commissioned expert that the PUB hired says 2035; we're fine domestically 'til then. So not 2020, as the Premier likes to promote, but rather 15 years thereafter.

So the question remains: What's the rush? We have a chance to do this right. This is the biggest investment in the history of our province. Why do they put on dunce caps and throw away their thinking caps over there?

Absent the economic stimulus of these projects, we understand—and I want the Premier to admit it today—that absent the economic stimulus—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable leader's time has expired.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has a growing economy and a growing population, \$62-billion economy. If we do not build Manitoba hydro, we face the prospect of running out of it, 10 years, 12 years.

Let's say that the member is correct. Let's say that it's even longer than that. What he fails to understand is we have \$10 billion in export contracts, that the customer is saying they want to buy our power.

What business person, when he has a contract to sell a good or a service, would say to them, let's delay it, let's take more time, let's not do it? Why would he forgo \$10 billion of export revenues that'll pay down the cost of the dams and keep rates low for Manitoba citizens and Manitoba businesses?

We have the opportunity to keep the lowest rates in North America, and he wants to delay that. That's foolish.

Mr. Pallister: The Premier reveals his lack of business acumen. What business person would do that? Every business person, if they were forced to sell at a loss, would do that. Every business person would do that. This Premier may have a degree from the London School of Economics; it is most certainly not in economics.

No expert witness defends the government's proposal, not one, yet the Chicken Little proponents

over there say we'll run out of power in the next six years.

Hydro has presented a proposal—Manitoba Hydro has presented a demand-side management plan, sort of Power Smart on steroids, that says that we would actually conserve almost four times as much power annually as we did last year under the Power Smart program. What that means is domestic needs will be put off even—will be met for an even longer period, so we do not need foreign markets. We do not need to spend 30 billion dollars or 25 to expand into foreign markets.

So I want to ask the Premier: Will he admit that the case he is advancing is for his own self-interest and to keep this province out of recession?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, this from the member that said we should put the brakes on building the floodway to protect the city of Winnipeg. He didn't want to build the floodway, doesn't want to build Manitoba Hydro, doesn't want to build hospitals and personal-care homes, doesn't want to build roads, doesn't want to build schools. This is a gentleman that will do exactly what he's done in the past, put the Manitoba economy in the deep freeze.

We have a program to create good jobs for young Manitobans, to have steady growth in the economy, to lift the economy by \$6.3 billion, and a part of that formula for a successful, growing economy is good, clean, affordable energy. That will be realized by following the tried and true formula of building export markets, where we have \$10 billion of confirmed sales. That will pay down the cost of the Keeyask dam, which was estimated at \$6.5 billion. That will keep rates low for Manitobans. That will keep rates low for business. That will allow us to grow the economy.

The member opposite wants to put a—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The First Minister's time has expired.

Mr. Pallister: The Premier's plan is eminently simple and simple-minded at the same time. It results in a doubling of Manitobans' rates and the continued export, at a loss, to US customers of our Manitoba hydro.

Expert witnesses La Capra, expert witnesses from the Manitoba Metis Federation, retired and current Manitoba Hydro experts, former NDP Hydro ministers Evans, Sale, former NDP premier Ed Schreyer, to a person, say this is a bad idea and it

needs the time necessary to make the right decision. That is our position and it remains our decision.

What the government is doing is advancing the biggest gamble in the history of Manitoba, choosing Americans over Manitobans, choosing construction over conservation, choosing radical haste over thoughtful analysis.

Would the Premier admit that his advancement of these proposals puts Manitoba long-term best interests at risk for the sake of short-term NDP interests?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, one thing we know about the Leader of the Opposition, he will grasp any thread that allows him to meet his preconceived notion of not building anything in Manitoba.

* (14:00)

Many experts have been drawn upon by the need-for-alternatives committee. Many experts have weighed in with their view. One of them is called Knight Piésold independent experts. Manitoba Hydro, and I quote, is using an appropriate approach towards minimizing capital costs by sharing risks with the contractors and suppliers through the principal measures of advancing design prior to procurement, identifying and managing risks, and detailed management of the construction process. I know that's a long way of saying they're doing a good job by thinking ahead and planning for the future of Manitoba's economy and good jobs in this province.

The preferred development approach, another expert has said—the TyPlan organization—exhibits the greatest socio-economic benefits to the people of Manitoba.

The greatest benefits to the people of Manitoba, that's what we're doing. We're supporting Manitoba Hydro putting forward a long-term plan which generates the greatest—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The First Minister's time has expired.

CFS Case Concern Request for Information

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I had the sad task late last week of meeting with the Herriera family. They were very understandably distraught by the loss of little Matias de Antonio, a four-week-old son to Maria Herriera. CFS had taken the healthy baby boy when he was only two days old with little

explanation to the family as to why this was done. And four weeks later, baby Matias dies while still in the care of Child and Family Services.

Can the NDP minister of child and family services offer any explanation to the CFS actions to this grieving family?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): There's nothing more tragic than the death of a child. I send my condolences to the family.

I think the member across the way knows that I am not able to discuss the specifics of this case, but I am able to tell him that we are going to investigate what happened and we are going to learn from this. These tragedies need to be understood. We have given more powers to the Children's Advocate. There is also powers with the Ombudsman and the Chief Medical Examiner.

Thank you.

Mr. Wishart: I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that tragedy should be prevented.

The Herriera family has been attending a CFS-supported visit with little Matias three times a week for the past three weeks. Shortly after the last visit, they received a call that the baby was in critical condition and arrived at the hospital as the baby passed away. Despite having been put in touch with the coroner's office, they have not yet received any explanation as to what occurred and have received no further contact or explanation from CFS.

Mr. Speaker, the family had the baby taken into care. The baby—baby Matias dies while in CFS care.

Can the minister not offer this family any explanation as to what happened?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Nothing is more tragic than the death of a child. Every member in this House feels the pain.

I think what is important to understand that the Children's Advocate office has been given the powers to investigate any death of a child that's in care and will be able to provide us with recommendations that will be shared with the Ombudsman as well as the Chief Medical Examiner.

Mr. Wishart: We put the family in touch with the office of the Children's Advocate, who have the legislative responsibility to investigate the death of any child in the care of CFS. The office of the Child Advocate had not yet been notified of this death when we contacted them on April 11th. They are

certainly aware of that now, and I trust that they will conduct a complete and thorough investigation.

But, Mr. Speaker, this family has suffered a tremendous loss with no explanations. They can continue to suffer because of a lack of information.

Can this minister offer some explanation as to what has happened to this Manitoba family?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: As I stated in my previous question, I'm not able to discuss the specifics of this case.

What I can tell you is that we have put measures in to ensure that when there is a death of a child that has been in care or has been in touch with Child and Family Services that the independent officer, the Child Advocate, will investigate that. They will provide us with recommendations to ensure that this tragedy cannot—does not happen again. Those recommendations will be shared with the Ombudsman as well as the Chief Medical Examiner.

Thank you.

CFS Case Concern Request for Information

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): We have a grieving mother and a grieving family who are—were trying hard to regain custody of their healthy baby when they found, just a few hours after they had had a family visit with that baby, that the baby was taken to hospital and died.

The question to the minister for—on behalf of this grieving family is: Will they get the respect and the answers that they deserve from this government as to what went so terribly wrong?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): There is nothing more tragic than the death of a child. I send my condolences to the family.

We will—the independent officer, the Children's Advocate, will investigate the circumstances of what happened. They will share that information with the Ombudsman, the Chief Medical Examiner. And we will learn from those recommendations.

We continue to work with the many community stakeholders and work towards improving the child-welfare system.

Mrs. Mitchelson: But there's—that kind of answer gives absolutely no confidence to the family that they are going to get any answers from this government or this minister.

My direct question to the minister is: It's fine for everyone else behind the scenes to get the answers to what went wrong. What information is going to be given to the grieving family, who deserve respect and answers from this government?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: As I previously stated, I'm not able to disclose the facts of this case in—to protect the family and the child. The tragedy of the death of this child, it upsets all of us.

We have put in place an ability for the independent officer, the Children's Advocate, to review and investigate when there is a death of a child in care or that has been—received services from Family Services.

We will continue to work with the Children's Advocate to improve the system. We will work with the Ombudsman as well as we make the recommendations and ensure that they are instituted.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Again, the minister is evading the question.

We have a family who had their baby—their infant—removed from their care. They were trying desperately to put in place the resources to look after that baby. They found that that baby died when it was still under her care, her watch.

The question is very simple: Will that family get the answers into what went so terribly wrong?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: When we hear of the loss of a child, the whole province experiences it.

We need to ensure that we are moving forward in making the appropriate changes to the system to strengthen it. We've done that. We have a lot more work to do and we do not shy away from that.

We were the first government to set up the independent officer of the Children's Advocate to do the investigations when a child dies in care or has been involved in the child-welfare system. We will learn from those recommendations. We will implement them and we will ensure that we share them with all of the authorities and agencies involved in our system.

ER Services Wait Times

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): On Tuesday evening, a father called an ambulance to take his 24-year-old son to a Winnipeg ER. His son had severe abdominal pain. After 10 hours without being seen, the son said he had had enough and he wanted

to go home. He was in tears, still in pain, but he felt very let down by the health-care system.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health to tell this family why her health-care system failed them.

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health): I thank the member for bringing this to my attention, and I would ask her if she could tell me a little more information afterwards. Have not been aware of this particular situation, but I would like to give my office a chance to speak with the family to find out exactly what happened, because, of course, we want people to get the care that they need.

We want people to know that emergency rooms are there for them when they need it, and if something didn't happen in the way it should have, we want to know what it was so we can fix it.

Mrs. Driedger: This is the second ER horror story we've heard this week, and the minister doesn't seem to even know what's going on in her own health-care system.

This government has had 15 years to fix the problems in the ERs. They promised that. They said they would fix it. Instead, things are getting worse under this NDP government.

*(14:10)

So I would like to ask this Minister of Health to tell this family: Where is the fix that they promised 15 years ago and in the 15 years following? They keep making promises. They aren't keeping them, and families are falling through the cracks in this system. Where's her fix?

Ms. Selby: Mr. Speaker, today and yesterday, the member brought very important information to this Legislature, but I do ask her if she could help us get in contact with the family so we could learn more about those situations.

If something doesn't go right the way we want it to go in our emergency rooms, if people aren't getting timely care when they need it, if something needs to be investigated, we want to know about that.

And I would urge this member to have these families get in touch with our office so that we can find out what happened so we can fix it.

Mrs. Driedger: I would tell the Minister of Health that the father did contact the hospital that did not provide the service to his son, and he is certainly addressing it from that point of view where he feels he will get more information and support.

Mr. Speaker, the dad also said that ambulance crews were stuck at the ERs for hours to off-load patients; he could not believe what he saw before his eyes. Again, this NDP government promised that they were going to fix this problem of ER off-loads by ambulances, and it has not been fixed although this government has years and years to fix it and said they would.

So I would like to ask the Minister of Health to finally admit that all of her rhetoric and all of her news releases are not fixing the health-care system. She has to do a better job.

Ms. Selby: Mr. Speaker, the people who work in the front care—the front lines of our health-care system have a very difficult job, particularly those who work in emergency rooms. It's a high-stress situation with some very challenging medical situations.

I can tell you that when people arrive in the emergency room they are seen by a triage nurse who makes a decision of who needs the help the quickest. Sometimes that's somebody in an ambulance, sometimes that's somebody who comes in another way. It's up to those front-line workers to make those decisions of who needs to be seen when.

I can tell you we've put a number of things in place to help people move quicker through the emergency rooms. Some of it is building personal-care-home beds. Some of it's making sure people have an access to a family doctor, making sure they can go to a QuickCare clinic or an access centre.

Mr. Speaker, it's not a simple solution. There's not one single answer, but I can tell you that by building, by having more doctors and more nurses—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister's time has expired.

Student Financial Aid Information System Software and Costs

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): In Estimates on Monday the Minister of Education said that phase 1 of the 15-and-a-half-million-dollar new student aid online program is complete. That cost \$350,000.

However, that minister didn't say is that this program has been suspended. There is no new program. Four years, 15 and a half million dollars later, nothing to show for it. Mr. Speaker, this NDP government is presently using software launched in 1995.

Mr. Speaker, will this new Minister of Education tell Manitobans and Manitoba students why they haven't got anything for their 15 and a half million dollars?

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): I reiterate the answer that I've given to the member several times, both in question period as well as in Estimates, that were he to go online today and go to the student financial aid system, he would be well served by that system. He would be able to make an application, and, hopefully, he would be successful in that application and go on and get a degree or a certificate or a diploma.

Now, Mr. Speaker, phase 1 of that program is completed to date. Phase 2, like IT programs, are complicated. It has taken more time to get it up and running.

The members opposite would have us do nothing. We prefer to get it right.

Mr. Ewasko: That software the minister's talking about was developed in 1994 and launched in '95. To get it right, does he have to spend 15 and a half million more dollars?

Mr. Speaker, we learned last week this NDP government has had to write off over \$110 million in taxpayers' money in the last 10 years. That's why it's disappointing, but not surprising, that this new Minister of Education has spent 15 and a half million dollars of taxpayers' money and has nothing to show for it.

Mr. Speaker, when will this minister show some integrity, end the cover-up and explain to Manitobans and Manitoba students why he has no results to show for the 15 and a half million dollars of Manitoba's—Manitoba taxpayers' money?

Mr. Allum: The truth of the matter is that we do get results for students all across the board. We have the lowest—among the lowest tuition rates for universities and colleges in Canada. We fund universities at 2.5 per cent and we fund colleges at 2.0 per cent, among the highest in the country.

And then, Mr. Speaker, when the student is finished and when they're graduated and they're in a position to go out and get a good job, then they can apply for a student tuition rebate which will rebate almost 60 per cent of their tuition.

We're on the side of students. We work with them every day. I'm not sure what side the other side is on.

Mr. Ewasko: Mr. Speaker, he's avoiding the question.

Trust is very important to all Manitobans. This new Education Minister ran in the last election promising to his constituents he would not raise taxes. He has now fired at least 11 teachers in this wonderful province of ours, blown 15 and a half million dollars on a student financial aid program that isn't working.

And whilst the project is suspended, is he going to continue this debacle of cover-up, or is he going to tell the truth today and tell the hard-working Manitoba taxpayers where the 15 and a half million dollars have gone?

Mr. Allum: You know, Mr. Speaker, the member's question perplexes me.

I know him to be a teacher and a parent, so I know he would support more funding for schools that we've provided every single year since we came into office. As a parent and a teacher, I know that he would support small class sizes. As a parent and a teacher, I know that he would support 250 more teachers being hired as a result of the small-class-size initiative. As a parent and a teacher, I know that he would support more funding for universities and more funding for colleges.

Mr. Speaker, his leader is proposing to cut more than half a billion dollars from the budget. It seems to me—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The minister's time is expired.

Manitoba Business Community Regulatory Policy Concerns

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba the NDP government is failing to improve the business conditions and to reduce the regulatory burdens on businesses. This was evident this morning when Rana Bokhari, for example, spoke at the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce breakfast.

One of the essentials in reducing the regulatory burden, you know, this NDP orange tape, is knowing that the amount of it in our province which results from the provincial government activities.

I ask the Premier: Has he measured the amount of orange tape which is tying the hands of

Manitobans trying to establish or run a business in our province?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I can see why the member opposite wants to avoid the expression red tape. I know that. I understand that.

Mr. Speaker, small businesses have had zero taxes in Manitoba up to \$425,000. That's the ultimate red tape reduction because they don't have to pay any taxes. No forms have to be filled out. They get to do the job properly. They don't have to remit taxes in Manitoba on the first \$425,000, and on the first half a million dollars of income of a small business in Manitoba, it's the lowest rates in the country.

There is a place for proper regulation, and the member has asked for—me questions on that. What do we do to regulate protecting Lake Winnipeg? We brought in some very tough laws, Mr. Speaker, to stop phosphorus going into Lake Winnipeg, because we believe in healthy—we believe that Lake Winnipeg should be a healthy lake and there needs to be regulations to do that.

So will the member let us know which regulations he supports and which regulations he does not support?

Mr. Gerrard: I support good regulations, but not the massive regulations that this government brings in.

* (14:20)

While the CFIB rates Manitobans' NDP as a laggard, the Liberal government in British Columbia has been a leader in reducing their regulatory burden. In the CFIB report, British Columbia is shown as having very strong political leadership to reduce their regulatory burdens. The orange tape built up in BC by a previous NDP government—here's an example. The number of regulatory requirements has been reduced in BC by 42 per cent since 2001 when the province first started measuring it.

When will this NDP government start measuring the orange tape burden it has imposed on people in Manitoba?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we've just modernized all the liquor laws in Manitoba. We've reduced the number of permits from over 13 down to about four. At the same time, we've increased the social responsibility requirements for those serving liquor to members of the public so that the public is better protected from practices which encourage overconsumption.

But at the—on the other hand, we've reduced the—we've created more opportunities for live entertainment in these venues, because we have a very flourishing arts scene in Manitoba and we have many young artists that could be exposed in performances to Manitobans and create a healthier atmosphere in restaurants and cabarets and hotels.

All of these things are intended to improve the quality of life in Manitoba. We use regulation to improve the quality of life. We reduce regulation where it's redundant and no longer necessary.

Another example, Mr. Speaker: We harmonized the road requirements for big trucks moving across borders to encourage more trade east and west in this country, so we've reduced and harmonized the regulations for the axle weights of trucks going across borders.

Where it makes sense, we'll reduce regulations. Where it makes—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable First Minister's time has expired.

Mr. Gerrard: While Manitoba's NDP government strangles businesses with orange tape, the Liberal government in British Columbia has implemented a regulatory policy checklist which is designed to make sure all new regulatory measures put in place actually make sense.

As well, the Liberal government of BC is planning a public consultation on additional items to measure and assess their regulatory burden this year.

I ask the Premier: When will his NDP government implement a regulatory policy checklist and hold public consultations on reducing Manitobans' orange tape?

Mr. Selinger: Every regulation that's brought forward is tested for whether there will be a public benefit for it.

When we brought in the new 'home' warranty program in Manitoba to protect Manitoba families from the most expensive purchase they make, we made sure that warranty program will ensure that a family buying a new home in this province will get a good quality product. We worked for years with the industry to make sure that they supported that warranty program, one of the better warranty programs in the country, Mr. Speaker. Is he against that form of regulation? I hope not.

When we brought in regulatory improvements to—when you buy a new vehicle in Manitoba, the price you see on the new vehicle is the price you pay. The industry supported that. Manitobans support that. Is he opposed to that form of regulation?

Is he opposed to the regulation to protect Lake Winnipeg? Is he opposed to the regulation that was just tabled in the House yesterday, a law to prevent young people from consuming flavoured tobacco?

Mr. Speaker, let him speak if he's opposed to regulations that protect the health of Manitobans, that protect the purchasing power of Manitobans, that'll protect the wages of Manitobans and protect the environment of Manitoba. All of those things make life better for families—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable First Minister's time has expired.

Recreational Facility Upgrades Funding Announcement

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): One of the best ways to build safer, healthier, more engaging communities is for government to support those projects that are a priority for families and volunteers that give of their time on the grassroots.

Specifically, we know that by investing in recreation facilities we can provide our young people with opportunities to discover and grow their talents and find a sense of belonging in their neighbourhood.

Can the Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities update the House on the exciting announcement of how the Province is investing in Winnipeg recreation facilities?

Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities): I was proud to join the MLA for Concordia, students, members of the community and, of course, Kevin Gibson from Status4 on a very exciting announcement: 3 and a half million dollars to support upgrades to recreation facilities throughout the city. This includes soccer pitches and pools, arenas, bike paths, cultural facilities.

We know that thousands of families use these facilities all throughout the city. You know, we want to make sure that we're investing in things that give families safe places to play and participate, builds a strong sense of belonging, builds on the skills and talents in our neighbourhoods and, of course, gives everyone a sense of contribution.

I want to take the time to thank all of the incredible volunteers in our neighbourhoods and communities for sitting on boards, for sitting on committees, for implementing these programs. And we're very proud to work with them on building safe, strong, healthy communities.

Thank you.

Biodiesel Producers Program Update

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): In 2004, the minister of Agriculture at the time mandated that biodiesel be 2 per cent of the diesel fuel consumed in Manitoba. Producers at the time in Arborg and the RM of Bifrost set up a business with the belief that there was a market and that the government-mandated program would use locally produced biodiesel in government vehicles and equipment.

Mr. Speaker, why did the Minister of Agriculture and this government fail the producers with this program?

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development): I'd like to thank the member opposite for bringing the question forward.

And I sense the opportunity's always there when we talk about the great things we do in agriculture and exploring options of added value of the products we grow in the province of Manitoba. And we talk about biofuels, we talk about biomass, we talk about a number of great things we do in the province of Manitoba. We talk about the partnership with Growing Forward 2 and exploratory and the two main pillars being innovation and research.

And we continue to work for the benefit for the agriculture society in the province of Manitoba, to provide additional dollars so they don't have to rely on strictly the main component of the main cargo, such as a grain that—I'm sure the members opposite really support the grain industry, and I heard them very loudly support the grain industry. And maybe the Canadian Wheat Board, certain branches of the tree, that today some of the producers are facing—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister's time has expired.

Mr. Graydon: Well, Mr. Speaker, the plant had a capacity of—to deliver 1,600 litres per day of biodiesel to Manitoba Hydro and to the government. The company and the producers who invested their money trusted the MLA for the Interlake and this government to help them, not desert them.

The plant currently sits empty, and the building is in receivership. The MLA for the Interlake is nowhere to be found. And thanks to the mismanagement of his government—because the government was supposed to buy the biodiesel from the—now the government buys the biodiesel from the United States, not from Bifrost.

Mr. Speaker, why did this government and the MLA fail the people of Arborg and the RM of Bifrost?

Mr. Kostyshyn: Obviously, the members opposite—and I guess much to the member from Midland's commentary about Highway 68 and its Interlake area doesn't exist, I kind of wonder why the commentary is that we talk about today of the importance we treat Manitoba equally no matter where we are geographically.

And we continue—will—working with the industry as best as we can. And let me just reinforce the fact. Growing Forward 2 is a great component of added value in the province of Manitoba. We will continue to work with stakeholder groups regardless what the members opposite feel is important or not.

But I do know the Department of Agriculture—this government believes in looking ahead into building the economy in the province of Manitoba, and we will stay focused forever and ever.

Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: It is time for members' statements.

Royal Canadian Artillery Museum

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): The Royal Canadian Artillery Museum at Canadian Forces Base Shilo is one of the largest military museums in Canada. It has won numerous awards and is a Manitoba star attraction. The RCA Museum is a great cultural asset for Manitoba.

The museum has recently been given a category A designation by Heritage Canada under the movable cultural properties act. This designation is a tremendous endorsement of the museum's programs and facilities. Only 8 per cent of all museums, galleries, archives, libraries and cultural institutions in Canada have a category A designation under the act. The staff and volunteers of the RCA Museum should be commended for this achievement.

The RCA Museum has four large permanent galleries which tell the stories of how military forces and conflict have shaped our province and our country. The galleries are world class in all respects. Included in the permanent displays is an entire gallery dedicated to the military history of Manitoba, which is a very important cultural resource for our province, particularly for our youth. The RCA Museum is also one of the few museums in Manitoba to regularly feature travelling exhibits from the Canadian War Museum and the Canadian Museum of History.

This year, from April 7th to June 29th, the War of 1812 bicentennial exhibit from the Canadian War Museum will be in Shilo. The RCA Museum is bringing national-level travelling exhibits to Manitoba, allowing thousands of people in our province, and especially youth, access to Canadian cultural heritage that they would not otherwise likely experience.

* (14:30)

In addition to bringing in national-level travelling exhibits, the RCA Museum also produces top-quality temporary exhibits of its own. On the 4th of August this year, the museum will open a very special exhibit in honour of the centennial of the First World War.

The RCA Museum at Canadian Forces Base Shilo is a museum with programs and displays of highest quality, an institution dedicated to constant improvement and a place dedicated to honouring all Canadians who have served in our military forces who have—or who have been affected by conflict. The RCA Museum is truly one of the cultural gems in our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Council of Women of Winnipeg— 120th Anniversary

Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James): This year the Council of Women of Winnipeg celebrates their 120th anniversary. I am pleased to have council president Kelly-Ann Stevenson and other members of the council joining us in the gallery today.

The council was formed when 10 Winnipeg women's groups came together on March 27th, 1894 to organize the Winnipeg council. It was one of the first in Canada. The longevity of this organization is a testament to the importance of their work and the strength of their membership. The council is made up

of a network of organizations and individuals who work together to pursue common interests on behalf of families and their communities.

In the 120 years since its establishment the Council of Women of Winnipeg has debated issues and advocated public policy on a diverse range of topics. They have long been a leading proponent for the voice of women in public life and have deeply influenced our city and province. They have supported nurses, low-income housing, access to education, home care, as well as fair salaries and employment equity practices. The Winnipeg council was also a founding member of women's model parliament and their early work led to the formation of the Consumers' Association of Canada.

With 120 years of hard work behind them this is just a snapshot of their incredible accomplishments. Today, they continue to advocate the diverse views of their membership. The Winnipeg council is part of a broader network of women's councils which includes the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba and the National Council of Women of Canada. Collectively, these organizations empower, educate and improve the quality of life for women across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the Legislature to join me in thanking the Council of Women of Winnipeg for 120 years of truly incredible advocacy.

Thank you very much.

Farm-Gate Food Safety

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Yesterday, in response to a question, the Minister of Agriculture claimed food produced on the farm and sold directly to consumers was not safe for consumption. He further went on to state he really didn't care what farmers and consumers think because he is the Ag Minister and is more concerned about creating rules and regulations than ensuring consumers have the option of developing a relationship built on trust and respect with farms wishing to sell their product directly to consumers.

The minister needs to get on—get with the times. Banning sales on the websites, banning producers from working together to deliver their product safely to consumers' door is heavy-handed and outdated. Banning the 83-year-old lady in Swan River from delivering a jelly salad to the fall supper is just plain silly. These are just a few examples of how far

removed from reality this minister and this government have become.

Everyone wants safe food, but creating more bureaucracy, more rules, more regulations does not ensure a practical approach to food safety. Enabling consumers and food producers to develop a trusting relationship based on mutual respect will do far more to ensure food safety than any NDP bureaucracy could ever hope to achieve.

Consumers will decide with their own pocketbook what food is safe for their families to consume, not a government out of touch with consumers. It is time this NDP government got with the times.

Thank you.

Education Week in Manitoba

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): This week is Education Week in Manitoba. We often speak of the value education has on our children's lives, helping them grow and succeed in whatever they choose to do. I'd like to take a few minutes to reflect on the impact teachers have on all our lives.

On April 8th I recognized South Indian Lake principal Wayne Marche here at the Legislature, who has recently received The Learning Partnership's Outstanding Principal Award. This truly speaks to the quality of education we find in northern Manitoba. Principal Marche's list of accomplishments also highlight the changing face of teaching. These days being a teacher involves so much more than being an educator. In one day a teacher might be a guidance counsellor, social worker, educator and coach to the students.

Before my time as MLA, I was a teacher for 33 years, 30 of which I spent teaching in Flin Flon. Those years as a teacher were incredibly rewarding and I never forget my time spent in the classroom. It was an honour to be a teacher and a coach to so many people in my community. Even now I find myself running into former students not just on the streets of Flin Flon but in places you would never expect, like mining conferences in Toronto. Thirty years later, I still see the effect my teaching had on their lives, and I wouldn't trade it for anything.

Mr. Speaker, I'm incredibly proud that many educators, especially now with their experience taking on so many different roles, get involved in public service outside the classroom as well. Several previous Flin Flon MLAs started their careers as

teachers. But it doesn't stop there. Many in this House are former teachers on both sides. The current mayors of Flin Flon and Snow Lake and Lynn Lake are all former teachers. The mayor of Lynn Lake was even one of my students.

Whether working in schools or in public service, teachers' contributions continue to make our communities stronger, inclusive and better places to call home.

Thank you.

Drinking Water in Manitoba Communities— Government Record

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on the increasingly cavalier attitude of this NDP government toward the needs of Manitobans.

For weeks, thousands of Winnipeggers suffered with no clean running water due to frozen water pipes. On Monday in question period, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) sloughed off his government's responsibility in this crisis. While this is primarily a City responsibility, normally the Province will help where a city has an emergency. But this time, for Winnipeg, the Province has been virtually absent.

This NDP government also seems to deny they have a constitutional obligation to ensure appropriate codes and standards are in place and being enforced when it comes to ensuring pipes don't freeze in our municipalities. Not only did the Premier attempt to unload his government's responsibility off onto the federal and municipal governments, but his response, which I quote, we just want them to get the pipes built, end of quote, implied he was just waiting for the City of Winnipeg to build them. Mr. Speaker, this is less about building pipes than about thawing pipes. Maybe if the Premier would take the hot air his government emits in this Chamber out into the ground under our streets it might make a difference.

Mr. Speaker, access to clean running water is a human right and a health and safety issue for Manitobans. Whether it's frozen pipes in Winnipeg, Carman and other communities or the complete lack of any running water at all in any number of our northern Manitoba First Nations homes, it is a Manitoba issue. But as recent as February 28 of this year, Global Winnipeg reported on the daily struggle of those living in St. Theresa Point to get clean drinking water. It is shocking and distressing that this can still be reported in Manitoba in 2014.

We have to ask, where was the Premier's government on this for the last 15 years?

Mr. Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing no grievances, orders of the day, government business.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): Could you please call Committee of Supply.

Mr. Speaker: We'll now resolve into the Committee of Supply.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, will you please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

HEALTH, HEALTHY LIVING AND SENIORS

* (14:40)

Mr. Chairperson (Mohinder Saran): Order. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Health, Healthy Living and Seniors.

As previously agreed, questions for the department will proceed in a global manner.

The floor is open for questions.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I'm just wondering if the Minister of Health had any responses to questions that were asked yesterday that she wanted to put on the record.

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health, Healthy Living and Seniors): Yes, I have a couple. I can do that now.

I was asked, can construction start on the old piles at the Selkirk hospital or do they need to be replaced. We've been told that the pre-cast concrete piles will be re-struck and they do not need to be replaced.

Also was asked how much it will cost to hire an engineer to determine if the piles are safe, and I can tell the committee that the engineer for the project has been on this project since the piles were first struck and will ensure that they are structurally sound.

I was also asked about the Notre Dame de Lourdes hospital, an update on the construction, and I can let this committee know that the project is in the tender documentation stage of development. The project is proceeding on time and on budget.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Just in regards to the Notre Dame hospital, as it's in my constituency, and the tender documentation stage, is there any estimate from the department, then, as to when these tenders will be received, and a perceived start of construction and completion date?

Ms. Selby: We're just looking for that information. We'll have to get back to the member.

Mrs. Driedger: Just a few questions in a follow-up to where we ended yesterday.

And I wonder if the minister could tell us, and the questions are related to the Gamma-Dynacare medical labs. I understand that they built a new lab here in Winnipeg last year. And I would like ask the Minister of Health: How much work does Dynacare do for Manitoba Health? Is there a contract between Manitoba Health and Dynacare for a specific number of tests to be done, or how does it actually work?

Ms. Selby: I can tell the member that private labs are contracted and are currently under negotiation with Manitoba Health—currently in negotiation with Manitoba Health.

* (14:50)

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister indicate how long the contracts with Gamma-Dynacare have been occurring? From what I can recall, we were sending, from Manitoba, a lot of specimens to them over a number of years, and then they built a lab here in Manitoba last year.

So can the minister indicate how long the government has actually been contracting with Gamma-Dynacare?

Ms. Selby: I can tell the member that Gamma has taken over labs that already existed, one such as Trainor Lab, but I will get back to the member with how long Gamma has been involved in that.

Mrs. Driedger: Do hospitals send specimens for testing to this particular lab?

Ms. Selby: Well, we certainly know that clinics and doctors do. We'll have to check on hospitals.

Mrs. Driedger: And I'm assuming that the minister knows that they did build a lab here, not just taking

over something, that there was actually a ribbon cutting last May, and it's a large building with—and it is a new lab. And they are actually employing 250 employees and report approximately 8 million medical diagnostic tests annually, serving about 2,000 health-care providers and their patients. And that's, they say, just in Manitoba. So it sounds like there is major use of this facility, which I understand works to world-class standards and provides additional capacity in the system. So it's taking the strain, obviously, then, off the system.

I would ask the minister if she could, when she does a response on these questions, if she could put that response in writing and also indicate how much money annually is awarded to this lab for the work that they do, and if she can also indicate the various types of tests that that lab does for the government.

Ms. Selby: Yes, Gamma definitely has a large, new facility, but they also took over a lot of the smaller private labs that doctors in Manitoba ran.

Mrs. Driedger: The minister indicated yesterday that the government uses private clinics for certain procedures and indicated there was Western, Maples and Altru, and I know that Western and Maples have been providing service for—in a publicly funded way for many, many, many, many years.

Can the minister indicate what the government contracts with—or contracts for with Altru?

Ms. Selby: I'm sorry. We didn't both hear the question the same way. I wonder if the member could repeat it.

Mrs. Driedger: I'm just wondering if the minister could tell us what the contract with Altru is for.

Ms. Selby: Yes, we have contracted with that clinic for many years as well. It's to allow patients in southern Manitoba access to the clinic, in some cases, for general medical care.

Mrs. Driedger: And can the minister indicate when that contract was established with Altru?

Ms. Selby: We have that information, but we've got to get back to the member.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister tell us what those medical procedures are that Altru provides through the contract?

Ms. Selby: And, again, we'll get back to the member.

Mrs. Driedger: And can the minister tell us where this clinic is located?

Ms. Selby: Altru has several locations in North Dakota, but I can get back to the member with specifics.

Mrs. Driedger: I'm aware that Altru has a number of clinics throughout North Dakota. They've got quite a few, actually.

I am going to ask the minister then: Are Manitoba patients referred to a number of different clinics or are there just certain ones that the government contracts with?

* (15:00)

Ms. Selby: Mr. Chair, I want to correct something that I put on the record earlier. We had said North Dakota. It's actually—the contract is with the clinic in Roseau, Minnesota, and that contract was signed October 21st, 1998.

Mrs. Driedger: If the minister has been able to get that information, can she indicate then what that contract is for? What procedures does it provide then to Manitobans in this clinic?

Ms. Selby: Mr. Chair, we're working on getting that information for the member.

Mrs. Driedger: So the minister then has indicated, and it sounds like for their whole time in office, they've basically had contracts with private clinics at Western, Maples and Altru.

So I have to ask the minister, because whenever Tories would say that private clinics could help the system, we've—this government has always then turned us into the bogeyman and saying that we are for private health care. And yet this government, when they do the same thing that we have promoted, it seems to be okay.

So what's the difference? Why is it okay for the NDP to use private clinics but the—when the Tories talked about using private clinics in the same, exact way, why did this government turn us into boogeymen and fearmonger the public about a two-tier health care system?

Ms. Selby: We fundamentally, as a party, believe that health care should be based on medical need, not on an ability to pay, but we are happy to look at using private clinics in a pragmatic way when it enhances medicare. But, of course, we stand firmly against an American-style, two-tier medicine. We will contract with a private clinic if it can contribute to reducing wait times, if it adds doctors and nurses to the system, as long as they're willing to follow all

of our standards and expectations of patient safety, accountability, all standards of safety as well. We look at if it's cost-efficient, that they're willing to be transparent financially and comply with all Manitoba regulations and the Canadian health act.

I think it's important that in the cases of Maples and some of the private clinics that we work with that it's never about poaching staff from the public system or jumping the queue, it's about enhancing medicare.

Mrs. Driedger: So who actually gave that answer, because I know the minister wrote it all down off of her iPhone. It wasn't really her answer. She was reading somebody else's answer. So who provided that information to the minister?

Ms. Selby: Mr. Chair, I will stand up for health care for people who need it when they need it, anytime, Mr. Chair, and I will never allow while I'm on this watch for an American-style, two-tier health-care system to come into Manitoba. I want people who need the care to get it when they need, not because they have the time, the money, to jump to the front of the line. This is what I believe in, it's why I'm a member of this party—the party that started medicare in Canada.

Mrs. Driedger: And I would remind the minister that it was a Tory government that brought medicare into Manitoba, so she doesn't have a high horse to stand on here. And, in fact—[interjection] well, we did. It was a Tory government that introduced medicare to Manitoba—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. Order, please. Let the member ask the question.

Mrs. Driedger: That's right, thank you, Mr. Chair.

* (15:10)

So the Tories have always said what the minister has just said in terms of the value and the use of private clinics. That is our position, has been our position, and yet when we have promoted it, this whole NDP party has run around and basically made us the bogeyman in it, that we were going to privatize health care, when all we have ever indicated is that we support private clinics that are publicly funded.

So why is it okay for the NDP to be so morally superior on this when we have said exactly the same thing, and yet they have vilified us for saying the same thing?

Ms. Selby: Well, Mr. Chair, I guess it's probably because we've heard the members of the opposition party say things like the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) who said in Hansard, in the House, on November 22nd of 2005, the member for Tuxedo said patients should be allowed to purchase these MRI services. So I guess that's why we have an understanding that they believe that people should jump the queue because their members have said things that seem very clearly to say that.

Mrs. Driedger: Interesting how this NDP government wants to sort of torque some of the messages that are out there when we have always indicated—always indicated that there is a role for privately funded, publicly paid-for services in private clinics. So, you know, the member is certainly—the minister is certainly off message in what she and her party are trying to promote, and I hope that—and I find it a little bit strange here, that for these types of questions, the minister is actually using her deputy for what are quite political questions that the minister should be answering on her own without turning to her deputy and asking for responses to some of these, which are NDP political partisan policy messages. The minister is really overstepping her bounds in that particular area, and I don't think it's a fair position to put her staff in. She should be able to stand on her own feet and answer those questions herself.

So, Mr. Chair, my colleague here has a few other questions about the use of the American clinic to provide Canadians with health care.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): And I'm actually shocked as well that the minister chooses to play political football with the help of Manitobans with her answers. It is a bit shocking but, at the same time, I would like to ask the minister: How often is the facility in Roseau, Minnesota, used?

Ms. Selby: I can give the member the most recent numbers that we have. From 2012-2013 show that 828 Manitoba residents used the Altru clinic at that—in that time.

Mr. Graydon: Could the minister explain what that was for?

Ms. Selby: I can get back to the member with a summary of things that were treated and looked at during that year.

Mr. Graydon: I appreciate that.

At the same time that we're using as—this facility that's in Roseau, Minnesota—it's a private facility as

sure—as I'm sure that the minister knows. But, if we have a serious issue or a serious case that is taken to Roseau, Minnesota and—do they get transferred, then, after being stabilized? Do they get transferred to where?

Ms. Selby: It would depend on the situation. In many cases they would return to receive their acute services in southern Manitoba or in Winnipeg RHA.

Mr. Graydon: Because of the high usage in the last year of over 800, that's twice a day that someone from Manitoba is using that. Would that be because the ER has been closed for 550 days in Vita?

* (15:20)

Ms. Selby: This is a question of proximity and convenience for residents. We also have similar agreements in Flin Flon for the people of Creighton, Saskatchewan, to come to Flin Flon because that's closer for them than to go to perhaps another clinic in Saskatchewan. So it's just a question of convenience for people and proximity of a clinic.

Mr. Graydon: If we have an acute situation at—is in Roseau, Minnesota, because it is convenient, because the ER is closed in Vita, I might add, that—is the STARS helicopter able to go down and pick that person up to transfer to a Winnipeg hospital or does it get transferred to a hospital in North Dakota or Minnesota?

Ms. Selby: Of course, right now, STARS isn't doing any interfacility transfers. It's only available for scene calls at this time.

Mr. Graydon: It seems that there's a lot of money being spent on a helicopter that we're not able to use.

So, in the case that the individual needs to be flown to another facility, what do you do in that case?

Ms. Selby: A couple of things. I'm not sure if the member's suggesting that we should ignore the advice of the medical professionals who've given us their go-ahead for scene calls only. If the member's suggesting that we turn to full service against medical advice, I'm not going to do that.

But I can tell the member it depends on the situation. Sometimes acute care will go on in the States. In many cases, somebody returns to Manitoba. MTCC, of course, they're the ones who make the decision on dispatch. They're the experts on the front line who decide who to send and whether it should be land, helicopter or jet.

Mr. Graydon: Could the minister tell me the difference between STARS being used at an emergency and/or a transfer? What is the difference in that?

Ms. Selby: I can let the member know that the experts in the field tell me that critical-care environment is the most and—challenging environment in the medical system. We rely on the advice of our medical experts to guide us on how to make sure that we're providing the safest service that we can.

It was under their advice that we returned to scene calls only. Scene calls are the ones that, for whatever reason, nothing else can get in there. You can't drive an ambulance in, you can't land a jet that—whether it's because it's isolated or, in some cases, traffic accidents on highways can be hard to get to for anything else. A scene call is used in the case where there's no other option other than the helicopter. It was on our medical experts' advice that they guided us back to scene calls, put a number of measures in place that they felt addressed some of their concerns.

It's also on their advice that we're going to get back up to full service. We have in place the Clinical Oversight Panel under the direction of Dr. Brian Postl. They're looking at a number of things in order to get us back to full service, including those interfacility transfers. I know they're looking at training, they're looking at dispatch, they're also looking at how bringing it underneath the umbrella of the WRHA will allow people to have that high-volume experience that they need on a regular basis in order to keep up those skills.

So, in these cases, we rely on our medical experts to let us know that their concerns have been addressed, and they have for return for scene calls, but they are working on the Clinical Oversight Panel to address a number of areas to return to full service.

Mr. Graydon: It's quite clear that the minister is just dragging the puck. She—I'm sure that she heard the question. It was very clear, it was very concise, and the answer had nothing to do with the question.

* (15:30)

I would ask her, though, that if she has the capacity to land a jet in Roseau, Minnesota, perhaps she could share that with the residents of Minnesota as well.

The question was clear: the difference between an emergency pickup and a transfer.

Ms. Selby: We—I—how to say this. We rely on the experts in the field. I am not an emergency doctor. I'm not a critical-care nurse. It's why we rely on the experts in the field to guide us. I can tell the member that the interfacility transfers require extensive efforts related to the protection of airways. I could certainly have some of our experts give us some more details on exactly what happens in the difference between a scene call and an interfacility transfer. I trust that it is a different medical procedure and when our medical experts are comfortable that we've addressed their concerns, we'll return to full service. But I will be relying on those medical experts. I don't know—the member's suggesting that we ignore that but I'm not going to do that. So I know there are some difference in terms of intubation and protection of airways, but I rely on Dr. Postl and the clinical—the experts at the Clinical Oversight Panel to let us know that their concerns have been addressed because, of course, they're the experts on what is needed to proceed safely in the scene call or the interfacility transfer.

Mr. Graydon: I won't have any further questions of the minister. She doesn't understand, and it's quite clear that she doesn't understand the difference between an emergency and working under those types of circumstances versus a stable patient that's being transferred. So I'm just going to say that I have no more questions for her as she's just ragging the puck anyway.

Mrs. Driedger: At this point, I believe the Minister of Healthy Living is now going to start her Estimates, and following that I understand that we will then go into the line by line.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay. Now we will now proceed with the questions for the Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Sharon Blady (Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors): Yes, I do.

I am pleased to present the 2014-15 expenditure Estimates for Healthy Living and Seniors. This portfolio is committed to providing Manitobans with support across the broad spectrum of healthy living for all ages. This is a diverse and important portfolio and it is an honour to lead the department. We are responsible for a number of Healthy Living and Seniors' policies, programs and initiatives most of which are aimed at helping Manitobans to avoid or

delay the onset of chronic disease, addictions and mental health issues, promote injury prevention and improve the overall health of Manitobans.

To this end, Healthy Living and Seniors has a major role to play in the health of Manitobans and in contributing to the sustainability of the health system for all. Healthy Living strives to support Manitobans to maintain health and wellness through all stages and ages of life. Close working relationships with colleagues in the department, other departments, regional health authorities, community and interest groups, schools and school divisions, child-care centres, universities and workplaces allows the department to support Manitobans to make healthier choices and live healthier lives.

With vital and varied investments in improving the quality of life of our citizens at all ages, stages and in various settings, we strive to support a holistic approach to health: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health.

In 2004, Manitoba was the first province in Canada to introduce a province-wide smoking ban in enclosed public places and in indoor workplaces. Since then, we have had many other achievements in this area and remain committed and steadfast in our intention to reduce tobacco use. Most recently, on May 31st, 2013, and as a result of legislative changes, tobacco sales were banned in pharmacies, stores containing a pharmacy, health-care facilities and vending machines, and in July 2014, Manitoba will prohibit smoking on playgrounds and beaches in provincial parks. Initiatives such as reducing points of sale serve to further denormalize tobacco products and their use, and such efforts will continue to reduce their acceptability as a consumer product and further the goal of being a smoke-free province.

This year Health and Healthy Living has dedicated \$588,000 in new funding to the development of initiatives in northern Manitoba to help reduce the cost of healthy foods that cannot be locally grown. As the 2014 budget speech stated, this year we will be helping make healthy foods, including milk, more affordable in Manitoba's most remote communities.

Making smart food choices is an important part of healthier living. To assist restaurant goers we are collaborating with the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association and the BC government to support the Informed Dining program in Manitoba. National chain restaurants who have signed onto the program with BC provide nutrition information

on 13 core nutrients, including sodium and calories, for all their menu items. Restaurant chains participating with locations in Manitoba currently include Subway, Boston Pizza, McDonald's, Tim Hortons, and Quiznos.

Another newly launched Healthy Living initiative is the Wellness Works campaign. The fulfillment of a 2012 Throne Speech commitment, the campaign was launched late last year, thanks to a close partnership with the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce. The campaign targets employers, rather than individuals, and invites them to make a public commitment to creating an environment that supports health and wellness. Employers take one or several pledges on a variety of wellness topics and implementing changes according to their context, recognizing the diversity of workplaces in Manitoba. The goal of the campaign is to have a healthier, more engaged, adult workforce which has multiple economic and social benefits.

The healthy sexuality portfolio supports the work of the Rainbow Resource Centre, one of Canada's longest running lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit, queer resource centres. For over 40 years, the Rainbow Resource Centre has worked to bolster self-acceptance and self-esteem, improve social conditions while reducing self-harm and violence, and increase the visibility and validity of LGBTTTQ Manitobans. Annual awareness events like the resource centre's provincial gay-straight alliance or GSA conference, which averages more than 500 students, teachers and youth service providers from across the province, has led to Manitoba being seen as a national leader in advancing LGBTTTQ rights.

Through our injury-prevention partnerships, we have been able to distribute thousands of personal flotation devices and bicycle helmets across Manitoba. This year 7,208 bicycle helmets were ordered through the low-cost bicycle helmet initiative, including 884 provided at no cost to children and families with financial barriers. Since the program began in 2006, over 97,000 helmets have been made available to Manitoba families. Since bicycle helmet legislation was introduced last May, overall bicycle helmet use in Manitoba has improved. Through conducting bicycle helmet observational studies before and after legislation was introduced, we found that helmet-wearing rates in rural Manitoba have increased by 33 per cent and rates in Winnipeg have increased by 8 per cent. Helmets provide cyclists optimal protection and have

been shown to reduce the risk of serious head and brain injury by more than 85 per cent.

In addition, this year, water safety grants continue to be disbursed to communities with identified water safety needs. Distribution of these grants continues to build important local water safety capacity. Education focus falls-prevention initiatives are delivered in partnership with osteoporosis Manitoba, including the Sip & Skip and healthy bones program, support groups, public forums, health fairs and presentations.

*(15:40)

The Manitoba Falls Prevention Network, co-ordinated by osteoporosis Manitoba, provides a forum for health-care providers to have discussions on falls prevention, namely through the yearly meeting of the network every October.

And this department pays attention to the needs of older—our older adults. The Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat continues their ongoing work with Manitoba's Council on Aging. Together, we are ensuring that older Manitobans have a voice within our government. As Manitoba's population ages, it is necessary that our government continues to respond to the needs of older Manitobans.

One pivotal action strategy has been the implementation of the Age-Friendly Manitoba Initiative. There are currently over 100 communities that have joined the age-friendly initiative. This means that 80 per cent of Manitoba's population now live in an age-friendly community. In addition, 16 of those communities have met the milestones that recognize the full achievement of an age-friendly community. Through the Age-Friendly Manitoba Initiative, Manitoba is a national leader in its methods to respond to the aging population and in the development of healthy-aging strategies.

It is through the efforts of the Manitoba Council on Aging that older Manitobans have a voice. With our support, the Council on Aging has been influential in bringing older Manitobans' perspectives to issues such as accessibility, active living, affordability of pharmaceuticals and other health-related resources, including housing.

We are committed to ensuring older Manitobans have access to information about programs and services. Through efforts of the council, and the secretariat, the Manitoba Seniors Guide has been revised and has been voraciously sought; over 1,500 calls were received through the Seniors

Information Line within one week of the announcement of its availability.

Manitoba is the only jurisdiction in Canada to have a Caregiver Recognition Act. Manitoba has made significant accomplishments in increasing awareness of the valuable services provided by caregivers. In April 2014, Manitoba celebrated its third Caregiver Recognition Day with a gathering of caregivers and other stakeholders.

We continue to support the Seniors Abuse Support Line. A total of 310 calls were received in the first six months of 2013-14. Additionally, the Manitoba Network for the Prevention of Abuse of Older Adults has developed awareness and communication, along with training initiatives, for service providers and communities.

Manitoba's Healthy Aging Strategy includes older adults, in meaningful volunteer opportunities, and increases public awareness of the benefits of healthy lifestyles. Long-term effects include healthier, more active, balanced and connected seniors, resulting in a reduced and delayed need for health care and other support services.

In the area of mental health, our department supports agencies committed to preventing and addressing the mental-health issues many Manitobans face. This includes peer support and public education, through organizations such as the Manitoba mood disorders association, the anxiety association of Manitoba, the Manitoba Schizophrenia Society and the Canadian Mental Health Association of Manitoba, as well as support for provincial phone line services, such as the Manitoba Suicide Line and the Manitoba Farm and Rural Support Services.

Mental-health awareness and stigma reduction continues to be a major focus. As we work to achieve awareness of mental-health issues and reduce stigma, I am happy to advise that 470 Manitoba schools are participating through the Healthy Schools Mental Health Promotion Campaign. Additionally, 17 school-based staff members have been trained in mental-health first aid, a program for adults who interact with youth.

On April 3rd, 2014, we co-led, with Ontario, the Leadership in Workplace Mental Health Forum with the Council of the Federation. This forum demonstrated best practices and successful workplace mental-health initiatives. The learnings—

Mr. Chairperson: Order. The honourable minister's time has expired. We thank the minister for those comments.

Does the official opposition critic have any opening comments?

Mr. Graydon: No, Mr. Chairman, I don't.

Mr. Chairperson: In that case, the floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Graydon: I'll start off by asking the regular-type questions and the request for a list of all departmental and political staff, including their positions and whether they're full-time. And I'd be happy if she would provide that—she doesn't have to read it—she can provide it in writing at a later date.

Ms. Blady: Yes, we will provide that to you in writing at a later date, for the sake of expediency.

Mr. Graydon: At the same time that the minister is doing that, Mr. Chair, would she also include whether there's the—they were hired through competition or an appointment?

Ms. Blady: Yes, we can also provide that information.

Mr. Graydon: And perhaps, if it's not an imposition, that she would give me a description of any position that's been reclassified?

Ms. Blady: Yes, we can get that information to the member through the Civil Service Commission.

Mr. Graydon: I'd like to also request a listing of all the vacant positions, and I'd like to find out if all the staff years are filled.

Ms. Blady: Yes, we can also get that information for the member.

Mr. Graydon: And also like to know how many and what type of contracts are being awarded directly and how many are going to tender?

Ms. Blady: Yes, that is information that would be compiled within the department and we can get that to the member at a later date.

Mr. Graydon: And I've noticed that the minister has the identical staff as the minister before her. I'm wondering, does the minister answer to the Minister of Health (Ms. Selby)? Because, as we know, she's a new minister and hasn't had a lot of experience, I'm just wondering if she gets her direction from the Minister of Health and answers to the Minister of Health as well.

Ms. Blady: I'm sure the member has already taken a look at the organizational chart for the department, and he will note that both myself and the Minister of Health are on the same line. There is nothing that would indicate that I take orders from another minister, that we actually share a department, and as you can see, there's different areas of responsibility for each of us. And it is actually a wonderful, collaborative and co-operative intersection of portfolios that allows us to both reap the benefits of efficiencies while meeting both the preventative and health-care needs of all Manitobans.

Mr. Graydon: Just to correct the record, I didn't say that the minister took orders from anyone. I asked if she took direction, not orders. There's a difference in that, and I'm sure she realizes that now. And, because she is new, I'm not deriding that. I'm just staying that there's a possibility with the same staff overlapping even if there are efficiencies. The senior minister, I would suggest, has a role to play in breaking in the newbie, so to speak.

Ms. Blady: Again, I do not take direction from the Minister of Health, but I can say that we have a wonderful and collaborative relationship that I, again, do believe does seek to do the best for all Manitobans in terms of ensuring a holistic continuum of care in both the preventative and health services provisions.

Mr. Graydon: So, then, would the minister agree that she's a net beneficiary of the experience of the Health Minister?

Ms. Blady: I would have to say that I'm the net beneficiary of the advice of all of my Cabinet colleagues, as well as all the members of the Chamber, as well as the stakeholders and citizens that I communicate with. There is a wealth of information and a wealth of experts in this province, and I do my utmost to ensure that I maintain healthy communication and contact so that in making any decisions or giving any direction that I'm making the most informed choice for the best outcomes for the citizens of Manitoba.

* (15:50)

Mr. Graydon: And could the minister give me the number of managerial positions in her department?

Ms. Blady: I was just curious if the member would like the—this information in writing or if it is something that I could just list off for him at this moment.

Mr. Graydon: If I could get it in writing in a timely manner, I would appreciate that.

Ms. Blady: Yes, then we can get it to you in writing then.

Mr. Graydon: Are there any management positions filled by appointment?

Ms. Blady: Again, that is information that we can get to the member in writing in due time.

Mr. Graydon: I thought that information would be readily available, but if you're getting that to me in writing, then I would certainly ask if there has been a management position filled by appointment. After the minister has pointed out very correctly to me that she is surrounded by experts in and out of her field, I would wonder, then, why she would have to appoint someone that wouldn't have maybe come through the system. So, if she can give me the reason that someone was appointed from outside, I would certainly appreciate that as well.

Ms. Blady: Yes, what we will do is we will provide you with all that information. Again, I'm offering you the provision of this information in writing for the sake of consistency based on the earlier questions. So, yes, that information will be provided in writing as part of a whole package for the member.

Mr. Graydon: Can you—at the same time, can you give me the names of all of the staff in the deputy minister's office?

Ms. Blady: Yes, the staff for the deputy minister's office, which does support both ministers, includes Glenna McClenahan, Sharon Sveinson, Janet Cairns, Marilyn Warren, Karen Herd and Suzanne Ring.

Mr. Graydon: Can the minister provide me with a copy of the contracts of the department and any special operating agencies who fall under its jurisdiction?

Ms. Blady: Yes, we can get that information to you, again, printed out.

Mr. Graydon: As has been pointed out by the Ombudsman's report that—or the Auditor General's report, that a lot of contracts that the NDP government have done in the past have been untendered contracts. Could the minister provide me with the untendered contracts over \$1,000 in her department from 2008, 2009 to 2010, 2011, 2012 and including 2012 and '13? These are vital.

Ms. Blady: Yes, we can do that for the member.

Mr. Graydon: Can the minister, just off the top of her head, in 2013–2012–2013, can she tell me how many untendered contracts there were in that year?

Ms. Blady: I want to make sure that I'm accurate with the member, so at this point, off the top of my head, I know of two sole supplier contracts, but we will follow up with the member to ensure that if there's any others that we notify him of those.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Chair, then, at this same time, if they're getting me the contracts, I'd like to know the amount and the type of contracts being awarded directly and why this is happening and why they didn't go to tender. I'd like to have a reasoning for that.

* (16:00)

Ms. Blady: Yes, we can provide those details for the member when we provide the full information.

Mr. Graydon: The NDP government promised to eliminate school tax on seniors. Why has that not been done?

Ms. Blady: I would suggest to the member that as that is a taxation question, that it was probably more—be more appropriately asked of the Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard). And so when it is her opportunity in Estimates, I'm sure that she would welcome discussion of that question.

Mr. Graydon: Since it has to do with seniors, I thought perhaps the minister would have an answer for that. But I—it's clear, and I've mentioned it before, that she is new in her position and so I understand that she doesn't really know everything that's going on there.

However, she has brought in a bill on smoking—a smoking ban. What type of research have you done on the implementation of the smoking ban?

Ms. Blady: I just want to—maybe I didn't hear the member clearly. I just wanted to get a clarification regarding his question. Are you asking about the legislation that was introduced or are you asking of a previous legislation regarding—today was related to flavoured tobacco, so I didn't—I just wanted to get a point of clarification as to what aspect of smoking ban you're looking at.

Mr. Graydon: Well, it was difficult to follow the minister in her 10-minute speech, but she was speaking about banning smoking in parks and in a number of other places, and also the flavoured tobacco. One thing that I did notice that she has

overlooked is chew. She hasn't banned that yet. I'm just wondering what type of research she has done on this and whether she has a fear that she is going to drive some of the tobacco products underground and create a black market for them.

Ms. Blady: Yes, okay, well, first of all, I guess in relationship to the role around taxation, just—I am the minister with a role regarding seniors, overseeing seniors, but it is my role to facilitate work with other departments. So, in regards to Finance, that's really about that minister's area of expertise.

As to the legislation around cigarettes, yes, the introductory comments did speak to previous work, and the work being done as it relates to the legislation in parks is actually legislation from my colleague in Conservation and Water Stewardship. So, again, that would be the minister to ask regarding that.

And, as to today's legislation, yes, there actually has been a wealth of research compiled from across the country, as well as looking at research and work being done and legislation being done in other jurisdictions. As stated earlier, when I introduced the bill, that this legislation today was geared towards addressing a loophole in federal legislation regarding flavoured tobacco, and specifically that it was targeted to that one specific area.

Mr. Graydon: Could the minister provide for me, because she doesn't seem to have some of the answers, it's someone else's department all the time, she just kind of implements them, but she did say that she doesn't take direction from anyone either, so could she tell me, then, in the Pharmacare program, what—has there been any changes to the program since 2011-2012 to date? And if she—if there have been, can she identify what they've been?

Ms. Blady: Well, it is one of those things that, again, regarding this portfolio, and you referenced a question to Pharmacare, again, it's about working in collaboration with the other ministers. And as to the, you know, the Minister of Health (Ms. Selby) was here for quite a fair number of hours. So I do not step on my colleagues' toes regarding their jurisdiction. And so, again, the Minister of Health would have to be asked back to answer those questions.

I, on the other hand, again, have much to offer. If I could—if you would like, I could continue regarding our commitment and steadfast intention to reduce tobacco use. That is within my purview. And, again, we just have introduced the amendments to

The Non-Smokers Health Protection Act that does prohibit the supply of flavoured tobacco products, flavours aimed at attracting children such as grape and cherry. It does not address the smokeless products because those smokeless products were not addressed within the federal legislation and the loophole that we are trying to fill. Our youth smoking rates are substantially declining, and this initiative will assist in preventing youth from starting to smoke. And that's the goal.

Mr. Graydon: And it's strange that the same staff can't give her the answers. So what I'm going to do is save the questions, the rest of my questions, for concurrence, and we won't need to depend on the staff, either, then.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I think we're prepared to move to the considerations of the appropriation. Mr. Chairperson, I want to provide, just for the staff, not by way of a question, but yesterday I was asking the Minister of Health regarding a potential helipad in Steinbach and reference that there was an organization that was considering doing private fundraising for such a helipad. I committed to getting to the department the name and the contact number of that individual, and they committed to me that they would contact him and have a meeting with the organization. So I want to provide that to the department and be assured that they'll do the follow-up.

And, with that, we're prepared to move to the consideration of the appropriations.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, seeing no further questions, now we move to the resolutions.

Resolution 21.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$35,717,000 for Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, Provincial Policy and Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

* (16:10)

Resolution 21.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$11,105,000 for Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, Health Workforce Secretariat, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 21.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding

\$47,537,000 for Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, Public Health and Primary Health Care, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 21.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$26,277,000 for Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, Regional Policy and Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 21.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$44,724,000 for Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, Healthy Living and Seniors, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 21.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,025,517,000 for Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, Health Services Insurance Fund, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 21.8: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$174,910,000 for Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, Capital Funding, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 21.9: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,314,000 for Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 21.10: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,040,000 for Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of this department is item 21.1.(a), the ministers' salaries, contained in resolution 21.1. At this point we request that the minister's staff leave the table for the consideration of this last item.

The floor is open for questions.

Mrs. Driedger: I don't really have too many more questions to put forward. We will indicate to both the ministers that there will be a number of other questions that will take place in concurrence because we didn't have enough time in Estimates here to carry through with all of the questions. I know I still have a substantial number for Health, and I know my colleague also has a number of them for Healthy Living.

So, you know, at this point, I do want to indicate a couple of things in relationship to the ministers and their roles, and certainly the Minister of Health (Ms. Selby) has demonstrated a serious lack of understanding in her portfolio. It does cause us very serious concern about her ability to handle the various aspects of this job. We do not have confidence in her ability to do the job, and it's being reinforced every day by her responses to questions.

And, in terms of the Minister of Healthy Living, it does seem questionable why she has lost her whole department. She's now basically a junior minister under the auspices of the Minister of Health, and it is questionable about why that position is actually needed, to pay a minister's salary and then her political staff in that, and it's not clear to us the value of maintaining that with this minister in place. It does appear to be more window dressing than anything else.

So, Mr. Chair, I would move—

An Honourable Member: So you'd cut it?

Mrs. Driedger: Well, before I make my motion, the member for La Verendrye said we would cut it. I would point out to him that his government already cut it—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. Order, please.

Mrs. Driedger: Anyway, perhaps the minister didn't pay attention, but basically his department—or his government basically slashed the department, and so now it is only one position that is in charge of what appears—and it's unclear exactly because it's all enmeshed and entangled in Health, so it's not really clear—What's that? *[interjection]* Yes, so it's not clear what the minister is actually in charge of.

So I would move that the two ministerial salaries set out in line item 21.1.(a) be reduced to \$15 each.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. Order.

It has been moved by the honourable member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) that the two ministerial salaries set out in a line item 21.1.(a) be reduced to dollar 15 each—*[interjection]*—\$15 each.

The motion is in order.

Are there any questions or comments on the motion?

Mr. Goertzen: I heard the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lemieux) actually say that he thought it was a little high, actually, and I—that's sage advice. It is often lower. I think the member for Charleswood is generous often both in her comments and her actions, and I certainly know, looking at a lot of the things that happen at the committee here, I thought were disappointing and often offensive certainly to many outside this committee but also to our critic as well.

So I have an amendment to the motion. I would move that the motion be amended to replace \$15 with \$10.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please.

Motion presented.

Mr. Chairperson: The motion is in order.

Are there any questions or comments on the motion?

Mr. Graydon: I think both of my colleagues are being far too generous in this situation. I wish they would've conferred with me prior to making those motions. We wouldn't have used up this valuable time.

And so I move that the—an amendment to the amendment to replace \$10 with \$5. I think that's appropriate.

Motion presented.

Mr. Chairperson: The motion is in order.

Are there any questions or comments on the motion?

* (16:20)

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I think I can speak for everybody on this side of the table in saying their—the critic has a significant lack of credibility in her role, and you know what? It's obvious she's got a lack of credibility even with her own caucus. I don't think I've ever seen a motion like this being brought

by the critic immediately undermined not once, but twice by her own caucus members. I don't know what sort of crisis of leadership they have over there, but it's certainly fascinating.

What I've also never seen, Mr. Chair, is an opposition and a critic that spends so much time in Estimates trying to distance herself, from the very words of her own leader. And, of course, we have a Leader of the Opposition that has indeed got a very, very indisputable record of cutting health care and being a proponent of American-style, two-tier health care. And it was stunning this afternoon to have the member for Charleswood try as fast as she could and as best she could to try to get away from her leader's own record and her leader's own statements on that.

And, of course—*[interjection]* well, we're—and here's the member for Charleswood, who's had, I think, 15 hours to ask questions, can't even give me five minutes to put some comments on the record, but what else do we expect?

Of course, what did the Leader of the Opposition say on May 28th, 2013? Well, he called two-tier health care a system that we need. And when he was asked his opinion in the House on December 2nd about American-style, for-profit health care, he said, I'm a guy who believes that the private sector offers some competitive advantages. In fact, it was not that long ago that he stood in the House and said that American-style health care is a better way to do things. *[interjection]* And, of course, as you can hear, Mr. Chair—as you can hear, he's got the full support of his caucus on wanting to continue down the road to American-style, two-tier health care. And you know what? Every time there's a vote in the House, every time something happens in the House, they stand up, time and time again, they vote against more doctors, they vote against more nurses, they vote against more capital in the health-care system that I know that the Minister of Health (Ms. Selby) worked so tirelessly to get. And I know the Minister for Healthy Living in her time in the role has continued to improve the resources for addictions services, for mental health services in the province.

And I know that the MLA for Charleswood is not new. She's been here since 1999, but before that she worked in the Filmon government. And she was there when the Filmon government made massive cuts to health care—health-care cuts that have never been seen in this province. Of course, these were the Filmon Tories that fired 1,000 nurses, cut 15 medical school spaces, and in that time we lost 116 doctors.

And it's the credit of the Minister of Health (Ms. Selby) and her predecessors in the NDP government, not only have we got those doctors back, we've continued to increase the numbers. We've replaced each nurse that was lost under the Tories by three or four nurses now.

We know that when the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) was working for the Filmon Tories, those Tories cut all new health construction, renovation and expansion; there was a freeze on health-care capital. I'm very glad to have a Minister of Health who's prepared to get her elbows up and fight for the health-care capital that we need to keep expanding in this province. And, of course, the member is working in a government that closed one hospital in Winnipeg permanently, the Misericordia ER closed and has never reopened, and four more ERs overnight.

Of course, they pretend that they are the supporters of rural health care. In that time period, they cut \$37 million from rural hospitals and personal-care homes that I know had impact on so many families outside of Winnipeg. They introduced home-care user fees. They cut the home-care services families rely on. Of course, we know they tried to privatize home care and only backed off—not from the thousands of Manitobans that came out to protest that, but when they realized the private sector really couldn't offer any advantages, they offered poorer service and more expenses.

And, of course, we now know that their leader, who they're trying to distance themselves from, has called for \$550 million in cuts across the board, indiscriminate cuts. We know that health care continues to be the biggest item in our budget, some 40 per cent of the budget. I can't even imagine what the Leader of the Opposition's cuts would mean for the health-care system.

So, if I could, I would actually move my own motion, suggesting a raise for the Minister of Health and a raise for the Minister of Healthy Living, but I won't. I think that—[interjection] I won't? We're going to—we'll be voting down, I suppose, all three of the motions or, you know, maybe this is the way you do things in caucus. Maybe there's a couple more motions that they'll be putting forward because clearly they can't speak with one voice. Their leader says something and they spend the next year and a half trying to run away from it. So it's no surprise I will not be supporting any one of the three motions we've heard this afternoon.

Mr. Goertzen: I appreciated the—getting a preview of the minister's leadership speech for the upcoming leadership convention. Hopefully, he has the opportunity to finish this leadership race when this one is under way—

An Honourable Member: When's your race?

Mr. Goertzen: Oh, I don't intend to run for the NDP leadership race. Although, you know, I suppose if there's enough people who are asking, I guess we could consider almost anything but that might be even a stretch too far in the miraculous thing.

I do think that the amendments will give an opportunity for the government and I actually think all the amendments are good. All three of them are positive amendments. I can't—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. We want to hear the member. Let me hear the member. Thank you.

Mr. Goertzen: I think that one touched a nerve with the Attorney General (Mr. Swan). I don't know why. I—he's run some half-marathons before, so he's run half-leadership races. There shouldn't be any difference.

But I do think, you know, when you look at the amendments and the subamendments, that all three of them are good and all three of them have value. I think I'll support all three. I'd be happy to see any of them pass, Mr. Chairperson. I think that they would all be for the betterment of Manitobans, send a message to both of these ministers but, in particular, the Minister of Health, who, I think, has had some challenges in these Estimates, and they sort of point to challenges that will happen in the future as well. But she'll have the opportunity over the rest of today, and perhaps over Monday and perhaps going into Tuesday, to consider some of the things that she's done and not done in these Estimates and how she could proceed in a more respectful way for Manitobans going forward into the future.

And I want to commend the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) for putting forward his leadership comments early and getting ahead of the race quickly, very similar to the speech that the current leader gives but it was delivered better, I'll say that—not really different in terms of substance but was more articulate, I think, and delivered better and that might hold him in good stead in his leadership race, and I wish him well.

But I do think we should move on and deal with these amendments that are before us.

Mr. Chairperson: Is the committee ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Chairperson: Shall the motion pass?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Chairperson: I hear no.

Shall the motion for the subamendment pass, that the amendment be amended to replace dollar ten with dollar five?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Chairperson: Ten dollars with five dollars?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Chairperson: So, I hear no.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour of the motion, say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Chairperson: All those opposed to the motion, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Goertzen: A recorded vote, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: A formal vote has been requested by two members.

This section of the Committee of Supply will now recess to allow this motion matter to be reported and for members to proceed to the Chamber for the vote.

If the bells continue past 5 p.m., this section will be considered to have risen for the day.

CONSERVATION AND WATER STEWARDSHIP

* (14:40)

Mr. Chairperson (Rob Altemeyer): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This

section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Conservation and Water Stewardship.

As had been previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner.

And the floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Just picking up our conversation there, for the minister, and I know the minister did offer to set up a briefing with his departmental staff, and I have communicated with his office to have that set up. So I'm not, as I say—if this line of questioning—and, like I said—and it's just a matter of I'm trying to seek some information—if it's best answered through that briefing process, then I'll accept that. But if it could be—like I said, if there's a Coles Notes version that might facilitate some additional information, just for myself, then that's agreeable to me as well.

So, again—so I'll ask the minister if the minister can advise what—if he can define what capacity factor is that's outlined in the information provided on his website in the data dump.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): The formula model is available in graphic form. Deloitte produced this to assist cottagers understanding the formula, and, of course, it sets out the role of—the capacity factor is one component of the formula. But just to make it as simple as possible, the capacity factor is necessary to determine how to allocate service costs within a park district. And, again, it's not—it works in tandem with other components of the formula.

So there may be actually some documentation that will assist, and perhaps the member, you know, if we can set up something in the next couple weeks, whatever is convenient to the member, but—and perhaps we could provide some documentation in advance to the member. It might assist in terms of where that goes. But, I mean, we—I could go through it, but it may be more useful for the member to look at it, and then he might have questions that are based more on how the formula is structured by Deloitte. So maybe that's the best way to proceed, but otherwise I can read this into the record, and I don't know if that's useful at this point.

Mr. Martin: Then just, again—and I'll appreciate that briefing and looking forward to, like I said, learning and becoming aware of how that transpires—the minister noted that the capacity factor is necessary to allocate costs.

* (14:50)

So, if my cottage's capacity factor is 10, versus a capacity factor of, say, two, am I assuming correctly, then, the portion of my costs would be higher—the allocation of my costs for, say, garbage and sewer and lighting and so on and so forth that are being attributed to my cottage?

Mr. Mackintosh: It can have a marginal impact on an individual cottager, but it's not the only factor. You know, there are other factors that are at play. And, again, yesterday we were talking about the capacity issue and how that is arrived at by way of survey and response and see if the member has any concerns expressed to him about the capacity factor for a particular situation that may be based on information that's not current or factual, we will certainly address that.

Mr. Martin: And, as I said previously to the minister, it's not that I take issue with the validity of the information because I simply don't know. It's just my desire to learn how that information and those figures contribute to an individual's total bill. So just, again, it's just my desire to get a better understanding.

Now, speaking of understanding, can the minister advise when the, sorry, park passes, the issuance of park passes became mandatory for individuals that had cottages in provincial parks and the rationale behind that change?

Mr. Mackintosh: The staff recall that, and this is subject to confirmation, we're just emailing out to see if we can get the information sooner than later that there may have been some forgiveness of park pass costs going back several years, but that's certainly not the policy since I've been aware of entry fee policy. Of course, recognizing that there were two or three years where park entry fees were waived for Manitobans, but we'll just clarify how far back it was, if, indeed, there was forgiveness of entry fees. But the entry fee is just what's required now of everyone who uses parks, and we'll also just check to see what the national park policy is and report back.

Mr. Martin: Can the minister advise what the 2014 vehicle permit fee is for access, the annual fee?

Mr. Mackintosh: The annual pass is \$40.

Mr. Martin: Can the minister advise what it's been for—how that would compare with last year's fee? If that—is it increased or stable?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, last year was \$40, and, as I recall, I think the year before was \$30 or \$35. We'll just double-check on that one, but there was an adjustment made last year.

Mr. Martin: Now, I understand, and one of the concerns that have been brought to my attention in terms of the cottagers, is that the government in their correspondence speak of Crown land rent, and land rent being in quotes. In—again, this is correspondence that the minister would have received since it was sent directly to the minister. For decades, cottage owners have and continue to occupy their cottages under a valid lease arrangement. The term rent has a very different connotation and meaning than lease. We require a clear definition of the term rent here and what is the government's plan for the community to lease the Crown lands to cottage owners. For greater clarity here, is it the government of Manitoba's plan or intention, in either the short or the long-term, to change from a lease arrangement, i.e., long-term arrangements, to rent arrangements, i.e., short-term arrangements?

So, again—so I guess on behalf of this individual that emailed to the minister, I'm making those queries as to the change of language from rent to lease and the meaning behind those respective words.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, those are just different words to describe the cost to occupy Crown land in provincial parks. The lease term is 21 years. That's been in place for a long time. By the way, we also have determined that if anyone wants to restart the clock on 21 years because of, for example, getting a mortgage, we're prepared to do that. But that has been the historic term and that will continue into the future as far as we're concerned.

I think it's important to recall that the rent or lease in a—of a property in a provincial park is highly sought-after. It's a preferred location for Manitobans, and the tenure, of course, is definite so long as they're compliant with the terms of their lease and rent. In other words, there is a—it's a perpetual term. When 21 years are up, the next 21 years start. That's the way it has been and shall be.

I have some information here. We were able to get it quickly on the annual entry fee. In 2012-13, there was a \$30 annual fee, and included the—including the GST. And so it was last year that it went up \$40 and it is being maintained at \$40 this year.

Mr. Martin: You know, part of the government's rationale for increasing cottage fees and lease costs by upwards of 750 per cent is obviously to cover the—as the minister outlined, I believe it was \$100-million investment plan in our parks and such.

Is—will the short-term users of the parks—so the recreational campers, the users of, say, the yurts, as the minister mentioned yesterday—will they also be seeing increases of consequence during that time frame, as well, to pay for their portion of said improvements?

Mr. Mackintosh: The contribution to the capital cost is—comes from many sources, of course, and when it comes to service fees, only those services that are enjoyed by park cottagers will be attributed to park cottagers under the formula that has been put in place.

* (15:00)

In terms of the park strategy's objective of ensuring that we can sustain our parks financially, there will be other options explored in terms of contributions from other park users. For example, you know, resource extractors, for one. That's an area there that we have to explore with our resource development partners in our parks. That is a practice that is very common across North America and, indeed, not a practice that we would ever adopt here, but in some US jurisdictions I even see that one state went so far as to attempt to attract resource extractors to their state parks in order to get revenues. That is, in our view, inimical to one of the key objectives of parks, which is conservation, but it does reflect, though, a practice that is common across the continent in terms of getting some fair contribution from resource developers who are operating in our provincial parks. So we'll look at that, and, of course, the commercial operators, as well, will be looked at down the road, once we can finalize the park cottager approach.

And, as campers know, there's been regular adjustments for camping, and I suspect those will continue into the future. So, like, we had fully set this out last March when we introduced the park strategy.

It's not our intention to be as aggressive as such neighbours as Ontario, for example, where, I think, they recover almost 90 per cent now of park costs from those who use parks. I think that the social equity of value of parks, the access for Manitobans

of all incomes, is an important component of our provincial parks.

Nonetheless, I think we have to ensure that, as we modernize our parks and make huge investments for the benefit of all those who come to our parks, that people pay a fair share and that we get it fair and that we listen to them and we consult and move ahead accordingly.

Mr. Martin: So what the minister just advises is that only these services enjoyed by park cottagers will be attributed to cottagers in terms of their share of increased rent costs.

In—again, in correspondence that the minister would've received, and I'm—I'll quote from the correspondence from—it was from a Mr. Doug Petrick, sent to the minister on the 31st of May of last year. And he notes that, in your letter, obviously referencing the minister's letter, you speak about septic services. In the north Whiteshell we collect all grey and waste water we produce and pay for its hauling and disposal. That is very different from members of the public, campers or others who use the park and who place this demand on the septic system without paying anything for it. The same scenario exists for water supply. Cottagers, again, provide for their own and everyone else uses the park's sources.

So, based on the minister's comments then, so these cottagers, then, in the north Whiteshell would not be attributed those costs?

Mr. Mackintosh: I think it's important to recognize and celebrate the services that car-park cottagers do enjoy. As I said yesterday in committee, I've had the benefit of sharing a family cabin on Rainy Lake—oh, by the way, a footnote: It's a cottage in Manitoba, it's a cabin in Fort Frances and it's a camp in Kenora. So that's—there's a language that goes with vacation country.

So at the cabin that our family has shared in, I know the effort that is necessary to get water, especially when you have three little ones running around, and I know the effort that's necessary to deal with waste, and I know the effort that's necessary when you don't have electricity. And I think we can sometimes celebrate that and sometimes it's nice to go to bed when the sun goes down, but we also know that the quality of cottage life can be greatly increased when the opportunities of services are available.

So, in our provincial parks, we've been able to develop a network of services, starting, for example, with a vast network of roads that is really quite extraordinary. Some are in need of repair and we certainly are aware of those, and that's why we have the \$100-million capital investment plan for Manitoba parks. When I drive in some of these parks, as I was able to do over the last couple of years, I'm pleasantly surprised at how strong the road network is, how well-maintained it is year-round. In fact, I understand, and I'll just—I can be subject to correction on this one but I understand that Riding Mountain Park, for example, where we have been comparing fees to—and the member for Brandon West will be familiar with this—does not have year-round services as it has historically enjoyed as a result of recent budget reductions. And I'd be glad to be corrected on that, but I believe I was advised by a staff member about that. Well, perhaps the member for Brandon would like to just correct me if I'm wrong.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Well, I'm always concerned when erroneous information is put on the record as it was yesterday when the minister stated lakefront cottages at Riding Mountain pay a fee of \$5,000. I can tell you which one does. I can also show you several that pay \$1,000, as do many of the back lots pay considerably less. Comparing provincial parks to a federal park is apples to oranges and—*[interjection]*—including bananas, as the Minister of Agriculture is fond of.

But, in terms of access, the cottagers at Clear Lake have access seven months of the year as per their leases, which are 99-year perpetual leases. That has not changed. That has been the case for as long as those leases have been in place. They can have access to their cottages for construction purposes and other incidents like that. The park will allow them access and will plow the roads for that purpose, but, other than that, the access is restricted to seven months as per their leases.

Mr. Mackintosh: And the member may want to clarify about the entry fee that Clear Lake cottagers have to pay.

Mr. Helwer: I guess the minister's getting used to asking questions so, yes, there are entry fees for everyone entering into national parks, and cottagers and everyone else pay a similar fee. You can have multiple passes for a family that are at a discount and the fees are set by the national park system.

Mr. Mackintosh: Which confirms the advice I had and, indeed, the entry fee is extraordinarily much higher than provincial entry fees. In fact, they're incomparable. But I—according to Parks Canada, a \$75,000 valued back-lot cabin at Riding Mountain pays \$1,725 in combined rent and service fees. So the member has to combine them. A \$300,000 lakefront cottage at Riding Mountain, according to Parks Canada, pays \$5,100 in rent and service fees, and a \$200,000 lot, a cottage off the lake, is a \$3,600 rent and service fee. So that was the information that we had confirmed from Parks Canada.

Mr. Helwer: Parks Canada is correct in those fees for cottages that are under the third agreement of the lease agreements. There are three in place, and the minister should probably find out the total number that are in each of those particular agreements. One had to do with assessed value; one had to do with CPI increases; and another had to do with a combination of those. So, while there are some that are paying assessed value currently, there are a number, and if the minister wants, I can get him those numbers, but again, we're talking federal park which I would hesitate to compare to a provincial park. The provincial park is the real issue that seems to be at the forefront here so those are the people that we're hearing from, not federal cottagers talking about provincial parks, but it is provincial cottage owners discussing this issue.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, I thank the member for, I guess, confirming the amounts and which is what the information is focused on. But, by the way, I think that when a park provides year-round service, it trumps another park's service that doesn't anymore.

And so the member had said that rent was being allocated for services. The service cost is to be eventually matched by the service fees, and of course the rent or lease payments are in respect of the fair market—a per cent of fair market value of the land that is occupied.

* (15:10)

When it comes to those services, though, that we were talking about, I was talking about the vast road network, but, as well—for example, at Falcon Lake, we can see the benefit of our water services that are invested in there. At West Hawk, we have a brand new lagoon.

And these are all efforts that are about human health; that's also about, of course, the health of our

lake and including aesthetics. And when people talk about solid waste or, I'm sorry, garbage, there are services available there, and the waste has to be processed somewhere. These are all services that cost, and it can't be out of sight, out of mind.

The parks in Manitoba also enjoy the benefit of docking and landing facilities and, indeed, a lot of investments are being made to enhance that. Our maintenance of roads is another investment that is important.

You know, I don't—my understanding is that when it comes to law enforcement, unlike in other municipalities, whether it's RCMP or enhanced efforts by Natural Resource officers, those are not covered. We are not allocating law enforcement costs to park cottagers, so not even every service is being allocated in the formula, so.

Mr. Martin: The minister made a comment that we have the best network of roads and also talked about how roads are cleared in the winter. Again, the same correspondence the minister would've received as well would disagree with some of the minister's statements.

Again, I'm quoting from correspondence the minister would've received: In terms of snow clearing, other than provincial highways, which are maintained and paid for by the department of highways and not parks, we receive no service and we have to clear our own roads.

Another individual wrote to the minister indicating: As for park roads, their condition are abysmal and deteriorating rapidly, the edges crumbling and no safety shoulders. Additionally, Manitoba Conservation has limited the cutting of grass on the edges of our roads to once at the end of the summer, increasing the dangerous aspect of travelling through the park due to a lack of wildlife visibility. As well, in the winter, cottagers plow and pay for their own road access. These concerns have been brought to the Manitoba Conservation's attention, but remain unaddressed.

As well, in another correspondence the minister would've received: The residents actually get together and pay for dust control on the road.

So, I mean, the comments that the minister talks about the network—best network of roads and clearing—that his department clears the roads in winter would be somewhat contradicted by those that access in and—or at least have been corresponding with the minister.

But, that being said, I do appreciate the minister's clarification that only those services enjoyed by park cottagers will be attributed to cottagers, and hopefully that will result in some clarification for those cottagers that have, obviously, expressed concerns as to the changes that the government is imposing on them.

The government has also introduced or indicated that they'll be bringing in a \$3,000 cap, which I believe expires in 2016-17, if memory serves me correct. The minister can correct me or advise if my date—if that 2016-17 is accurate for the \$3,000 cap—end of which time the cap will be removed.

I'm wondering if the minister has any idea of how many properties will actually reach that cap by the time it's actually removed, since all the cottagers have, indeed, received their bills and it's just a matter of reducing the—or phasing it in now over the 10-year period.

Mr. Mackintosh: I recall receiving the same correspondence as the member was quoting from and, of course, the services provided in our parks vary, depending on park district. And where those services vary in intensity, the service fees will vary, as well. If there are changes to service levels, then there will be reductions in service fees. Some park districts have very extensive road clearing, and I saw some of them myself, and they were certainly, shall I say, at least comparable to the provincial road network outside of the park.

But, when it comes to other services—we talked about grass cutting the other day—if there are cost savings as a result of the no-mow zones, then the park cottagers will benefit from that cost saving. I know that some park cottagers will have to, you know, plow out for—on their—within their particular blocks with the immediate access, but it's the main roads that are plowed, and that's been the way for a long, long time.

And I would say to any park cottager and to the, you know, the associations out there, that if they want to see a change in services, if they want to see services either enhanced or reduced, we would entertain that. And—but that—the service levels have generally been in effect for quite some time, and—but we want to be responsive to concerns, and we have been.

When it comes to roads, we know that there is at least one road in the Whiteshell that needs some attention and, in fact, that's why we've devoted

multiple-year funding for the—for a road at the—in the Falcon Lake area. That—it's in an area that is challenging to maintain because of the swamps or the low-lying area there. But some of the roads—and I've been on them—for example, Nopiming, are first class. And the residents congratulate the Province on the quality of those roads.

In terms of the cap, the current plan is to maintain the cap and it would be reconsidered, then, for the '17-18 year. And what we do in that year will be subject to ongoing discussion and evaluation, considering that we want to make sure that there are—there's no hardship from what we are doing here over the next decade. And at the same time, we will be informed by our morphing into a new appraisal model, and we want to make sure that that is done as carefully as possible, that we do that in a way that doesn't provide any sudden change in fee levels.

So that will be determined down the road, but for now we're good for the several years out.

In terms of the question about how many properties are affected, we have to crunch some numbers on—for that.

Mr. Martin: I appreciate the minister's willingness to provide me that information and his comment that they're not looking to impose hardship on these cottage owners, although, I mean, the fact that the minister's essentially willing to offer cottagers a reverse mortgage if they can't pay the imposed increase would suggest that they're—they are cognizant that, at least for some cottagers, there will be a financial impact that they may struggle with paying.

* (15:20)

But to change tacks a little bit, Mr. Chair, I'd like to get an idea of—the minister and I have had some conversations in the House about the sustainability of Manitoba's moose population, specifically to game hunting area 19A. I'm wondering—and I'd asked yesterday—it was brought to my attention that the government had a position, a population ecologist, that has been vacant for the last two years, whether or not that position has been filled. And if it hasn't been filled, if the minister has an idea of when he anticipates that position being filled.

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, I'm advised by the division that the recruitment process is now under way to fill the position.

When it comes to game hunting area 19A that's directly east of Duck Mountain, that there—this year there are four surveys, actually, and Hydro is involved in some of that work. The value of—or the cost of surveys, for example, in 2011-12 was \$338,000, and 2012-13 it was \$341,000, but in '13-14 it's \$420,000, and that includes both Conservation and Water Stewardship as well as Manitoba Hydro with what we calculated was a contribution of about \$70,000 or so for that survey. So it's my understanding that the survey has now been completed and it's expected that the results will be available this spring.

We started to look at how we should best prioritize surveys for next year, looking at, of course, the most critical—or areas of greatest concern. And so what's important there is that we take advice as well from those around the land, and particularly in this part of Manitoba there's a very active group of, you know, quite extraordinary individuals, actually, who are working in two ways to address wildlife populations. One is the Moose for Tomorrow, and the other is a moose advisory—what's it called? *[interjection]* Moose advisory committee. I visited with both of them and I've had ongoing discussions with the Moose for Tomorrow. They're very passionate individuals and I think are real prime examples of a partnership that's needed between the wildlife officials in our department and people on the land that care deeply about moose and, indeed, elk in that area, as well.

Mr. Martin: The minister has advised that there'll be an increase in licence fees for 2014. Will the increased revenue be going into monitoring or into general revenue? And if the minister can give me an idea of what he anticipates the gross take from the increase in licence fees will be for the 2014 fiscal year.

Mr. Mackintosh: The member came in just after the bill went through the House, but, working across party lines, we were able to bring into Manitoba the Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Fund. And it's the first time that there has been a trust fund established so that a contribution from hunters, for example—also trappers—can go into wildlife conservation measures. The—and I won't go over it too much. The record's available to the member, and his colleagues will know about this, but this was been—this has been an initiative that was vigorously urged on us by the member for the Interlake, and also was based on efforts, advocacy, by the Canadian wildlife—or the

Manitoba Wildlife Federation and others, including individuals, over the last number of years.

So we thought it was important that the government empower people on the land, hunters and trappers and, indeed, fishers, to participate in making decisions about conservation efforts that are necessary to maintain strong populations of wildlife in Manitoba.

The bill passed, then, during the summer. And that then led to the change in the hunting licence. It was \$5, that was agreed. I think that had been suggested way back, and I think it was just assumed all through the development of the bill that it would be \$5, and that was accepted by the organizations that have been stakeholders in this. And so that has been brought in.

And, as a result, we now have a new trust fund in Manitoba. Those are hard to get from our Treasury people, but we did secure a trust fund, which means two things. First of all, the monies are separated, separate account. It enhances accountability, transparency. But, as well, the dollars can carry over from year to year if they're not fully expended in one year.

But this is about empowering hunters in a way that we've never seen before. We are saying to representatives from hunting organizations and other conservation groups that we trust them to know where investments can best be made, get the best bang for the buck. So we are—that is a new era now of sharing funding responsibilities when it comes to investments.

Now, I'll just add as a footnote that the concept isn't entirely new in Manitoba, because when it comes to fishing, we've had a fish enhancement fund for some time. And we've learned some lessons from that. And now, it's all being folded into the Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Fund. So I thank the members opposite for their interest and support for that initiative.

The next stage now is to invite the membership for the committees, and we'll do that over the course of, I guess, the summer or so, so that we can ensure that there is a decision-making capacity in place as we move into the fall and the revenues begin to accumulate.

In addition to the \$5 fee, there was some adjustment for the non-resident hunting fee for the Lodge and Outfitters Associations who operate a training program for guides. We think it's important, as well, to give that away to those that are out there.

And, again, I think it's a good example, excellent example, of a partnership with a stakeholder organization that we have a very high regard for and is an important part of an economic sector in Manitoba.

Mr. Martin: And, again, I concur with what the minister's saying, talking about the passion of some of these groups, and I mean, Moose for Tomorrow has also been an organization that I've met with. And I mean, they've done a tremendous job in educating me about their concerns when it comes to the sustainability of the moose population here in Manitoba.

How does the minister justify moose hunting season in GHA 19A for a two-week season in the fall, and again, in the winter for 30 bull tags when survey results show less than 100 moose and very few bulls? Any licensed harvest is cumulative, and you also have to take into account, obviously, rights-based users, predators and disease.

* (15:30)

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, I know there has been, you know, conversations in the valley about numbers, so we have taken seriously those concerns. The anecdotal information, it's important. It's citizen science that I think we have to even rely on to a greater extent as we move forward in many ways not just when it comes to moose populations.

But the survey that was done will be also very important and as well the analysis of the hunter questionnaires that are now in our possession I understand. So those numbers will all be crunched, and I know that Moose for Tomorrow has been very passionate about urging, you know, swifter response to numbers as they come to the fore, and I'm very sensitive to that as is the department. That's why we are making efforts, I think, to a greater extent than—well, I think we're making efforts that are attempting to be responsive to the concerns of Moose for Tomorrow for one and the moose advisory committee to ensure that we are nimble when we have the final numbers.

So we're moving close to a time when we're going to get some numbers and it's our intention to deal with the, you know, if there's a very serious population decline as is being alleged then we will make efforts and if we have to make efforts outside of the annual hunters' guide then so be it because that's what Moose for Tomorrow has sought. And so we're just going to make sure that we've done our full due diligence and then we will act as according to

our mandate and what the hopes and certainly expectations are of people who care about moose populations in the valley.

A couple of other points. We're also looking to see how we can more fully automate the ability of citizens to get wildlife information to us. And we're looking at other citizen science efforts as well and that's just a bit of a shout out to Moose for Tomorrow who really, I think, have alerted this minister for one to several issues that—where we can do a better job.

We also, of course, have concerns about elk in the area and we've been able to do some surveying there as well. And so there's a significant amount of data that is being analysed and we certainly hope to get to a conclusion there in the weeks ahead.

Mr. Martin: And again, Moose for Tomorrow, one of their concerns that they've discussed, and I'm sure they've shared with the minister, is as deer populations push into traditional moose territories they bring with it, I may get this quite wrong, but brain worm, I believe I'm accurate in that. And there has, my understanding is, been an increase in the number of moose found with brain worm. I'm wondering if the minister is aware of that or if what I'm understanding anecdotally is, in fact, has been confirmed by his department.

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, I'm advised by the Wildlife division that brain worm has been a significant concern on the east side of the province, and, as a result, we looked at strategies, for example, in Minnesota, and how they were attempting to deal with that. Deer, by the way, don't die of brain worm, I understand. I was told that it—they only carry it and that it can infect moose, as the member suggests. So, as a result of that, deer licences were increased on the east side, with extended season and an increased bag limit—I think at 26.

Of course, the context is changing. We've had two difficult winters in the bush, and the deer population is certainly different now, but we have no plans to change that effort at the moment. But there's been a rough couple of winters, and we think across the province, generally, deer populations have been impacted.

Mr. Martin: The minister's comments about deer populations were obviously front and centre at the Manitoba Wildlife Federation's AGM a few weeks ago, and the minister had staff there discussing it. I know publicly that the minister's department—that Conservation's big-game managers publicly

advised that we may be looking at a size of 40 per cent of deer populations dying off as a result of the abnormally cold winter combined with the deep snow. One of the comments being discussed at the Manitoba Wildlife Federation was whether or not that kill rate or, sorry, the die-off rate may be as high as 50 cent and the government's considerations as to actions in response to such a high die-off rate. I believe the last open outright cancellation of deer hunting season was back in the mid-'70s, '74 and '76—'74 to '76 seasons were cancelled. So I'm just wondering what the government's plans are, if any, regarding the mortality rate of deer as a result of the winter.

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, and I look forward to hearing directly from the Wildlife Federation. I was unable to attend their annual meeting as I did last year, but we'll be meeting with them soon. But my staff report that the members that were in attendance were divided on how to deal with it. Some said no change, some said end the season, and some said let's go partway. And bucks only is one option that is a live consideration. I think that has been done in the past but—and, as well, I've had discussions with other stakeholders in the last couple of weeks alone on this one. But we'd—at this point, it doesn't appear that the population numbers would warrant a closing of the deer season in Manitoba, but it looks like we'll have to have some adjustment which I think hunters will appreciate will be necessary so that we can enjoy great hunting opportunities ahead.

Mr. Martin: Staying on the topic of big-game hunting in the province of Manitoba, I'm wondering—and more for clarity—is there mandatory reporting right now of hunting harvest activities as it relates to big game? My understanding is that there is not, but I just wanted clarity on that.

* (15:40)

Mr. Mackintosh: In the areas of the province where we've identified diseases, whether it's chronic wasting disease risks because we don't have chronic wasting disease in the province yet but there certainly is a risk on the western boundary of Saskatchewan and, as well, where we've had TB—bovine TB we have required not only reporting but samples. And when it comes to mandatory reporting overall that is not a practice that Manitoba has adopted historically I understand.

Mr. Martin: And, again, just for my understanding, is there a particular reason why we haven't adopted it or is there, like, just—I'm just curious about pros,

cons, other—and do other jurisdictions have mandatory reporting for big game?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, our wildlife population officials have been able to put in place strategies as population numbers have informed the department. Many, many strategies, whether it's even road closures, for example, where there were formerly logging roads or whether it's, you know, awareness, consultations, you know, environmental licences, the wolf management, the surveys very importantly, of course, and our enforcement measures with our NROs and the closures.

And so they have recognized that those measures can be very effective when you compare that to the red tape, if you will, or the onus on both hunters where you got about 30,000-plus hunting licences out there and then the processing of those. On balance, the department's been of the view that the current practice, with the caveat, as I said earlier, that we're looking always to enhance our intelligence about what's happening on the land by way of surveys and citizen science. But the survey has not been one that has been accepted as one that may provide the greatest benefit without causing a lot of red tape.

Mr. Martin: And, again, just for my own information, is this—would this be consistent with other jurisdictions in Canada?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, we could make a call around and see what they're up to and let the member know.

And, you know, I mean, we could find out at the same time—maybe the same phone calls or whatever we're going to do. You know, if they've found that that was useful in terms of population management, then we can think about that. And we can talk to the member as to whether he thinks that might be a good way to proceed without being an inconvenience because, quite frankly, I mean, I am concerned that we ensure that the—all the rules in place for hunting in Manitoba are—you know, work for hunters.

And we want to get kids out; we want to get families out. We've got to do a much better job of getting kids out. And it's my view—and I'll be pursuing this with the department—that we look at all the rules and regs and make sure that all of them are absolutely necessary for population management and safety.

And so I'm a little reluctant to start putting new rules on hunters except when it comes to poaching. And we will be introducing a poaching law in

Manitoba that's unique in the country to address those that think they can poach and not pay the full price.

Mr. Martin: Sorry, the minister just indicated they'll be bringing in new poaching legislation. Is it anticipated that that will be coming in this current session?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, it's on the Order Paper.

An Honourable Member: Oh, okay, sorry.

Mr. Mackintosh: Notice Paper, Notice Paper.

Mr. Martin: I understand that about four years ago, the minister's office engaged in consultations about the new licensing system to bring Manitoba into the contemporary world licensing and that significant dollars were spent on this.

What is the status of the new licensing system? When will that be in place?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, just to clarify, is the member saying hunting and fishing licences?

An Honourable Member: Yes, sorry, yes.

Mr. Mackintosh: I just want to share with the member that when I came into the portfolio, and having had an Ontario outdoors card, I think it was called, I was very keen to see us move away from the old paper licences, and so I asked the department to embark on, you know, options.

By the way, I'm not aware of any dollars, let alone significant dollars, on—spent on any system, so that's—and they looked at what was happening elsewhere. I think Saskatchewan has just moved to a system; Ontario's been on one for quite some time. And I did share my views with the Wildlife Federation, for one, that we would begin to explore how we could modernize our licensing regime.

It came back to me that there were some considerations that had to be thought through. It doesn't mean that there are barriers to getting it done, but there are some sensitivities that have to be borne in mind and one is, first of all, systems cost. And I don't want hunters and fishers bearing some undue cost because systems changes like that can be a lot of dollars at a time when budgets are tight.

Second of all, it has—it could have a very profound impact on the current vendors. This current system is very accessible to people all across Manitoba and vendors also can enhance their trade as a result of offering fishing and hunting licences. And

so we'd have to look to see how that would continue—both accessibility and the opportunities for commercial operators.

* (15:50)

But I can just tell the member that we're continuing to look at options and, indeed, there was a meeting just held this week with one vendor out there who has a very exciting product. But those are the concerns that we have to work through. I really do hope that we can come with some proposal that is both cost-effective and respectful of hunters and fishers and commercial operators to get us away from the old paper model and allow us to get our hunting and fishing licences at home through our computer and so on, but we're going to do it right. But it is a commitment that we have, and we're going to get it done. It's just a matter of how, and I can't even commit to exactly when yet but it is a very active file.

Mr. Martin: Another when question for the minister, and it's when the final strategy report will be released in respect to the east side, sorry, the elk population—the forest elk population, eastern Manitoba.

Mr. Mackintosh: I've been advised that there was some survey work done in southeastern Manitoba around an elk population. There had been concerns on the land that the numbers were down. There did not seem to be a significant decline generally but there appeared to be a decline in bucks, which is of concern to the department, so I've been advised by the head of the division that the department is currently formulating a strategy as to how to best address that.

Mr. Martin: Does the minister have a time frame when he anticipates release of that strategy?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, I'm advised that in the coming months the department will come back with options but there isn't licensed hunting, I'm advised, there so that's not one of the—adjustments to that wouldn't be one of the options. But there would be other approaches—but there will be approaches that have to be in sync with what is being observed.

So we'll—we can send the member any information that we have as we move to a conclusion there on what our next steps are.

Mr. Martin: I understand section 82 of The Wildlife Act states that following—that, sorry, section 83 of The Wildlife Act advises that in addition to the

reports required under section 82, the minister shall, within six months of the close of the fiscal year, 1987 and every fifth year thereafter, prepare and lay before the next session of the Legislature the following: a report containing a review of the status in the province of the animals listed in schedule A, a review of the wildlife management programs, an analysis of trends and evaluations of the capability of the wildlife resources.

I'm wondering if the minister can provide me a copy with the most recent report, I guess, probably two thousand—my math might be rusty, but if it's every five years starting—2007 might be the last report.

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, I'm advised that we'll certainly provide that to the member.

Mr. Martin: The minister's also stated that—his interest in developing a beluga whale management plan. Now, I note that beluga whales spend the majority of their lives in areas controlled not by—or Manitoba but through the territory of Nunavut. I wonder if the minister has had any conversation with his counterparts in Nunavut to see if they're receptive towards the minister's initiative in regards to the beluga whale management plan.

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, well, I have to check my memory as to whether I had a specific discussion with the Nunavut minister on this one. I had a general discussion, and he was licking his chops as I was talking about beluga whales—a little different—and as well, the federal minister on what we were doing. And, in fact, I had a couple of conversations with the federal minister.

Just to bring the member up to date on this one, that was a commitment in TomorrowNow, and so over the last several months, we've launched some work on this. I shouldn't say several months, actually—just over the last year or so when last year we were able to provide some funding for Oceans North to do some work with belugas up north to tag and identify the patterns of their travel in the bay.

We have also recognized that Ontario has done some good work in this regard, and we have been informed by those efforts. My message to the federal minister was that, once we get a good handle on the parameters of our effort, we will be talking to the federal government and, necessarily, Nunavut, to pursue, as well with Ontario, a—what I hope will be a bay-wide approach. And so those efforts are under way now.

I understand it's an active file in the department, and we'll see where this can take us because I—you know, I'm prepared to push jurisdictional boundaries, but I think we're confident that we have jurisdiction clearly within the estuaries of the rivers. And it may be that that whole jurisdictional analysis can be just overcome by some inter-jurisdictional co-operation and management strategies.

I do think that if we don't deal with this now—by now, I mean in the next few years at the outside—that some of the economic development opportunities in the North will either cause a terrible problem or will be prevented. And I think what we have to do is to find the balance that's necessary, particularly with shipping routes that are in tune with the beluga population and their presence in the bay.

So it's a—it really is a call for pursuing sustainability in the traditional sense of the word. So away we go.

I think that Manitobans don't often perceive that this is a coastal province, but I do think that they will do so more in the future as opportunities in the North become more obvious. And people are saying with climate change, those opportunities are certain, but it has to be done in sync with our—the environment of the North and the belugas are one such population.

* (16:00)

As well, of course, there are opportunities in the tourism sector and those, as well, have to be done in sustainable ways. So we have partnered, for example, with Oceans North on an ongoing basis, and we'll continue to pursue the development of that strategy, and it will be the first of its kind, certainly, in Manitoba. But we have to avoid what has happened to other beluga populations in Canada. We still have a healthy beluga population in Hudson Bay, I'm advised, and our job is to keep it that way.

Mr. Martin: My line of questioning for the minister's soon wrap up for the day. I've made commitments to a few other colleagues in this House and I want to keep those commitments.

But I understand the government has, for the last number of years, applied for a special minister's permit to allow for more water than negotiated in the Northern Flood Agreement to held be—to be held back via the Manitoba Hydro-operated Missi Falls control structure, located at the Churchill River on the east end of the South Indian Lake. I'm wondering, with those special permits, special

ministerial permits, do those come out of his office or through one of his colleagues?

Mr. Mackintosh: The member's correct. Those are permits under the auspices of Conservation and Water Stewardship.

Mr. Martin: Can the minister advise how many special minister's permits have been, if the terminology has been allowed or provided over the last five years, related to the holdback of water operated by Missi Falls control structure?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, we don't have that information at hand, so we'll seek that out and get it to the member.

Mr. Martin: Does the minister's department, do they have any studies as to the effect of the water reduction via the Missi Falls control structure or the construction of the Churchill River weir on local fish populations? I mean, it's—one of the local operators brought to my attention, that their observation was that the cold water fish, in particular, the Arctic grayling and the brook trout, have virtually disappeared from the Churchill River.

Mr. Mackintosh: Just to clarify, is this the—a concern with regard to the town of Churchill? And the—I wasn't sure where the focus was. The member's talking about fish population impact studies and we can certainly get that but there were—there's a couple of issues that I had heard about related, I think, to the member's question. But if it was regard—was it with regard to concerns from the town of Churchill that the member's referring to, in which case I would have a more readily available information.

Mr. Martin: The observation that was provided to me was that, again, the cold water fish species that I previously identified have virtually disappeared from the Churchill River, and the observation might be that that might be an impact, a result of the—some of the changes

Mr. Martin: Again, the observation that was provided to me was that, again, the cold water fish species that I previously identified have virtually disappeared from the Churchill River, and the observation might be that that might be an impact, a result of the—some of the changes to the water conditions in that area. I'm wondering if the minister is—has any comment on that or if the observation's accurate.

Mr. Mackintosh: The department will find the latest—or if there's a series of environmental studies

on impacts on the Churchill River, and we'll advise the member accordingly.

Mr. Martin: Okay, and my last question of the minister—and I made my opening comments about how since being assigned to this critic role, my—I've learned a great deal. One of the things I learned about is—and through the—actually, the minister's own departmental officials during their presentation at the Wildlife Federation was the situation that we have in Manitoba about, obviously, aquatic invasive species and the situation that the—that his department is undertaking to address the spiny water flea, the rusty crayfish and the zebra mussel.

Now, I understand the department has purchased two—sorry—two decontamination units. I just want to confirm that and whether there's plans for additional decontamination units when it comes for zebra mussels. And, again, I believe it was the minister's staff presenting at the Manitoba Wildlife Federation's AGM who indicated that potassium chloride applied to an enclosed harbour is the only method of eradicating zebra mussels, and whether or not there's any plans for eradication or if there's been—sorry—if his department has identified any harbours in Manitoba that require eradication and what harbours those would be in regard to this invasive species.

Mr. Mackintosh: Just in terms of the decon units, yes, they were purchased by—I think in co-operation with the fish enhancement fund, as I recall. And, by the way, that's another effort now that will certainly help to enhance moose population management, elk populations and so on. It's a new source of contribution.

In terms of zebra mussels, the—we're certainly could offer a more detailed briefing for the member on that one in terms of the process that has been followed. There's an internationally recognized protocol that has been very closely followed here as a result of the discovery of zebra mussels in Lake Winnipeg. They have done—undertaken efforts to identify the extent of that and they've put in place measures to—or, I should say, options to address it. And so we'll be proceeding, recognizing that the option that the member stated, that the department is looking at very carefully, is based on some very close consultations with affected communities. But there may be some opportunities there as a result of some science, but it has to be science-based and it has to be, you know, in tune with the local—with local stakeholders.

* (16:10)

So those efforts are under way, and the—are keen to get aggressive work under way to attempt to prevent what could be a very serious and costly challenge for Manitoba waterways and Lake Winnipeg in the long run. And we've seen what's happened elsewhere when it comes to invasive species, and Manitoba's not immune. And, indeed, when you see all the waterways, even in Minnesota alone, with zebra mussels and you look at the configuration of the watersheds, it perhaps isn't a surprise, but it certainly is a disappointment. So that is one option that the department has been looking at and has been—we have made—established a relationship now with the science group that worked on that option, and so we'll proceed.

I think as well, though, we should note that we are committed to taking additional efforts, when it comes to invasive species. It's one of the initiatives in TomorrowNow that I wanted to flag before the member ends. It's critical, as the world gets smaller in so many ways, that we enhance our barriers against invasive species coming into Manitoba.

You know, the cost, for example, of restoring Delta Marsh is one very good example of the destruction of the Asian carp. You know, we let that Asian carp in here in the late 1800s. People thought that would be good for everything, and it has been hugely destructive of one of the great marshes of North America and destructive of the ability of that marsh to sequester phosphorus, for example, that's on its way to Lake Winnipeg. So, when we have our organizations like Ducks Unlimited come to us and say, hey, look, we've got some big bucks if you'll help us, we can't say no to that. So we invested, I think it was about half a million dollars-plus in that effort, which, I understand, has reaped some excellent rewards and we'll stay on top of that.

But that's an example of the expense and, you know, the destruction that can come from this, so stay tuned as we develop other strategies to deal with certain other invasive species, whether they're aquatic or otherwise.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Thank you, Mr. Chair and to the minister. My couple of questions are in regards to lagoons and capacities, and I was just wondering if you've had a meeting recently with the mayor and council of the Town of Powerview-Pine Falls in regards to their lagoons.

Mr. Mackintosh: If the member has any questions or concerns about whether it's—because I suspect it may be about funding for capacity enhancement and,

if so, then I'd certainly be prepared to look at how that can be addressed through the Water Services Board. Or, if it's about the regulations and that, in which case that's this department, then I certainly would entertain the minister's concerns and we can address them, whether here or any other time.

Mr. Ewasko: And, Minister, so my question was: Have you had a chance to have a meeting with the Town of Powerview-Pine Falls in regards to their lagoon? And it does have something to do with regulations and within their capacity of the town. So have you had a chance to have a meeting with them?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, I just can't recall right now whether that—if they had requested a meeting or not. And I don't recall being on the meeting of the eastern lobby group agenda, but I can look at that again. But, you know, if there's been a meeting request that the member knows of, he can certainly bring it to my attention. But I don't have a recollection of that.

Mr. Ewasko: So, okay, thank you, Mr. Chair and Minister.

So part of my question here is that the Town of Powerview-Pine Falls has basically been told there is no more development because they have reached their capacity of the lagoon. And I'm just verifying that here today with you and your department if that so is true.

Mr. Mackintosh: It wouldn't be unique if, in fact, their ability to deal with their waste is at capacity that, you know, it has to be dealt with by modifications. That's not unusual. That's—you know, municipalities are upgrading all the time. But we'll make inquiries of the department. We can advise the member, hopefully, you know, tomorrow what communications there's been and what our analysis has been and share that with the member. And if there's a problem that can be solved there, then we'll attempt to do that and work with the municipality because we want to see growth. At the same time, you know, there's rules in place for good reason, and we just want to make sure that they're applied fairly. So we can make inquiries, and staff are already emailing out of here to see if we can get something sooner than later for the member.

Mr. Ewasko: Thank you, Honourable Minister, for that, and I look forward to your—to whatever you do find on that. The one point that I have is if it is true that they've reached their capacity, it's sort of interesting to me. And, again, not being a hydrological engineer in any way, shape or form,

when Tembec actually closed in 2009 and 2010, they were looking at, you know, 270-plus jobs there. So they closed down, and it seemed that as Tembec was still up and running, the lagoon and the capacity seemed to be fine, and then now that Tembec is closed, it seems all of a sudden now the town has reached their capacity. So I don't quite understand how that's possible. So I'm not sure if the minister can, you know, make a comment to that, and then—or are we just going to wait for some of the correspondence to come back?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, I take the member's point. If population or, you know, activity is down, why is, you know, capacity up? But—so I won't address the question until we get the facts, and then we'll let the member know.

Mr. Ewasko: Since—

An Honourable Member: Oh—

Mr. Chairperson: Honourable Minister.

Mr. Mackintosh: Some information is coming in, but, yes, I understand that the Tembec system was separate, so that might—

An Honourable Member: Breaking news.

Mr. Mackintosh: Breaking news—breaking news—but, anyway, we'll follow up. I think we better get the full facts, and then we'll work it through with the member and see what has to be done.

Mr. Ewasko: I appreciate that, and thanks, Mr. Chair and Minister. Same question along the capacity of the town of Beausejour. Again, they're at a development stoppage right now due to the, again, reaching capacity. And to me it seems that some of the regulations—and I'm not saying that to get outside of the regulations, but some of the regulations as far as when, say, a fifth or sixth cell is allowed to be released, even though water tests have been done and that.

To me, it just seems that the proper balancing of the ins and outs are not seeming to be sort of the common sense, even though the water tests have been done and they seem to be even better than the standards that are put in place for—you know, again, I'll look to the minister to sort of check in on that, because I would hate to see, you know, the upcoming month's growth or any future development be stalled due to, you know, not being able to release some of the liquid.

* (16:20)

Mr. Mackintosh: But I certainly do have a recollection of meeting with Beausejour and the mayor directly on this issue, and as I recall, there was an agreement to work on this and address both the regulatory and funding issues there. But—and, you know, I can advise the member on the status of that. I'll have a note probably on my desk about it. But I think it's important to remember that the growth of communities has to be in sync with environmental protection, and I think communities are well aware of that.

The regulatory regime is absolutely critical to the well-being, particularly when we are looking at the Lake Winnipeg basin, that towns are adequately equipped. But there's a number of ways to address the challenge of growth and the capacity of waste water treatment, and whether it's expansion or whether it is a wetland—constructed wetlands or whether there's different treatment, those are options that are available. And I know that the meeting was a very good one, and we're moving ahead working with the community to address that concern.

Mr. Ewasko: Thanks, Minister, for that. The point that arose in question period in regards to the boil-water advisory up at Great Falls—I just want to know if—where the minister's department is on that. We're looking at eight years of boil-water advisory and it just—to me, it seems like a couple of the solutions that have been brought forward are fairly pricey, as we do see, but, at the same time, eight years for people to be going without drinkable water is—seems to be a little bit of a stretch.

So I just would like to know where the minister is and his department is on the Great Falls situation.

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, our department is responsible for, of course, the oversight of regulation and that's—the boil-water advisories are done with our involvement, but this is a funding issue, essentially. Water Services Board and the municipality have been engaged in this, and the member should know that there had been an arrangement made, and the ratepayers of the area thought there was too steep a cost to invest in the treatment, even with a very sizable federal-provincial contribution.

But, since that time, I understand the federal government has not come back to the table, and so perhaps the member can use his good offices to pursue funding interests from the federal government to partner. The Water Services Board and municipality, I think, came up with a very robust contribution that I think just needs to be touched up

by the federal government and then the job can get done because, like I say, the feds were involved earlier. So perhaps—and I talked to the member about that, or perhaps the minister responsible for Water Services Board—we're certainly prepared to, you know, equip the member to help that issue along.

But that's my understanding of it as a result of the member's question in the House. I got a briefing note, and I'm not the lead on the funding. I'm on the rules piece of it, but that was the analysis that the department had provided, I think, from the Water Services Board.

Mr. Ewasko: Thank you, Minister, for the answer. I was just wondering if you could provide me with some of that correspondence so that I can move forward and make sure that the proper information is out there for our—for my constituents and also have that conversation with their reeve and council out there as well.

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, we'll pursue that. I think it would be the Water Services Board. That's not my jurisdiction, but I will certainly pursue that on behalf of the member.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Let me start by—I think that Manitobans were—almost all Manitobans, at least—very pleased about the fact that the ELA is going to be still operating and under the International Institute for Sustainable Development. It's been a long fight, which both the minister and myself were involved in it at various parts.

Let me just clarify the funding arrangement that the Province has with IISD. I note that the dollar amount is the same as it was last year. Does that mean that the money from the Province to look after the Experimental Lakes Area is included within the regular budget of the IISD? Is that what's happening?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, as result of discussions with the partners, in particular, IISD—Manitoba's the largest funder of IISD—the best role for Manitoba, it was determined, would be to allocate specific funding for ELA support through IISD now that it will be the gatekeeper there. And, as a result of that, we are realigning the funding agreement with IISD to allocate dollars specifically to ELA that historically had not been part of the funding agreement. There were other priorities that had been pursued and we're able to adjust that. So, that was what was arrived at as our proper role.

And another piece of it that was very important for IISD was, in light of funding reductions,

particularly from the federal government or CEDA, I think it was, they have appreciated a longer term funding commitment from the Province, so there's some sustainability there that they need to get through this next phase.

So I think those are—that best characterizes our role and I just—and kudos to the member for his advocacy on this one.

This was a bad decision that was made in Ottawa. I think there was some people that really regret having made that decision. I don't think some people maybe understand what the history of the ELA was. And I don't think I have to reiterate that for the member as time is limited.

But I think that the importance of Manitoba's change to its flow of funding and its longer term commitment were necessary. And some people may make the case, well, you know, let others take it. No, we thought we had to have a stake in this one. And it's going to still require some ongoing work to conclude our funding agreement, the work plan, in its final form.

But, there are science jobs in Manitoba that we have to not only save, but, I think, enhance.

So I think, as a result of the whole co-operative effort, we have some good opportunities ahead. And one of them, I think, is a more focused effort on eutrophication of our lakes, and it's one where there is some interest at IISD in working with us to pursue. And it may be that we will be able to supplement those efforts with other efforts as well as we go forward.

So I think in conclusion, though, I—the greatest kudos have to be to the Ontario government. I've had direct discussions myself with officials there, ministers. But I do know that it was a premier of Ontario that took a personal interest in this, and helped to stickhandle this to what I think is at least plan B. I think plan A was serving the world well, but here we go.

Mr. Gerrard: I know the minister has talked about a plan for surface-water management and it's been in the works for some time. I'm just wondering when the minister will be releasing his plan?

Mr. Mackintosh: I know the member had commented on this in the House and he deserves a full explanation.

* (16:30)

The—this is a big effort to change the way we manage water in Manitoba, and it really comprises of two parts. One is the overriding strategy, which is high level in some ways in terms of changing our approaches, incorporating ideas around no net loss of wetland benefits. It's about flood prevention, of course, phosphorous movement, nitrogen, also about drought resilience. And that work is—on that strategy has been informed hugely by key stakeholders but also the approach comprises an overhaul of drainage licensing—we spoke about this in here yesterday or the day before—whereby some of the key, I would say the key, stakeholders in Manitoba, have come to an understanding that if we can move to risk-based licensing of drainage, in other words, get out of the face of farmers when it comes to replacement of drains, of culverts—you know, 18 inch for an 18 inch, cleaning out ditches—remove the regulatory red tape there, I use that term purposely, and instead focus on where the greatest risk of water—of drainage licensing would be and focusing on seasonal wetlands, or what they're called class 3 wetlands and their preservation and enhancing deterrents for illegal drainage.

We can strike a right balance—in other words, move to what I would call sustainable drainage. We can't—we have to recognize that drainage is a critical part of Manitoba's productivity in providing food to the world. We have to become more productive.

At the same time, though, we can't, both for the sake of social licence and for our long-term sustainability as an agricultural leader in the world, we have to move to a different way of moving water off the land. So there was a decision that the regulations could be changed in a way that would address those needs, the immediate needs of farmers to get land off—or get water off the land fast in spring, for example, and get productivity going and say whoa to the very serious and big drainage of the seasonal wetlands that have huge ecological benefits. So it was a—it's a deal, if you will.

So what we have done is gone and tested that and most recently at the AMM convention in November and the conservation district meeting. The AMM meeting, for example, Geoff Reimer, one of our leaders in the department on drainage licensing, presented to the membership. And I think were, like, 300 people that came to that. And I would say generally, according to his observation, a thumbs-up around the room but a lot of questions and suggestions.

And then I was involved in discussions since with municipal officials and many others about tweaking the Surface Water Management Strategy, making sure we get it right, making sure that it is explained well, that we understand the impacts.

So the matter is before our colleagues now. We are looking at making sure we get it right, understanding the impacts. But I think that this will be an important part, not only about Lake Winnipeg, but ensuring that our local waterways are sustainable.

And I will just say that there's one outstanding issue before we propose this. It will be a proposal and it will go out in the next, well, we expect in the next couple of months at the outside, but we'll have some work to do in terms of—

Mr. Chairperson: Order. Order, please. Sorry for the interruption, but a formal vote has been requested in another section of the Committee of Supply.

I am, therefore, recessing this section of the Committee of Supply in order for members to proceed to the Chamber for a formal vote.

If the bells continue past 5 o'clock, since we are already past 4 o'clock, this section will be considered to have risen for the day. Thank you.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

* (14:40)

Mr. Chairperson (Tom Nevakshonoff): Good Afternoon. This section of the Committee of Supply will continue with the consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Municipal Government. Would the minister's staff and opposition staff please enter the Chamber.

As previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): I would like to take this opportunity, before we begin, to introduce Rob Pankhurst, one of my staff members, so that the transparency is clear, and I'm very proud to have him sit here giving me good advice.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): My question for the minister responsible for municipal affairs: His government has legally required a whole lot of municipalities to amalgamate. Some have amalgamated. How many of the municipalities which are legally required to amalgamate have not yet

amalgamated, and what will the minister do if they are not amalgamated in time for the election this fall?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Municipal Government): As the member for River Heights knows, the threshold that was set in 1997 in The Municipal Act was a threshold of 1,000. To—what that means is that any municipality who is under that 1,000 is required to put forward an amalgamation plan. That meant in—given the numbers according to the 2011 census that there were 47 partnerships, that's mostly two municipalities getting together. In some cases, it's three municipalities coming together. So there was 47 partnerships that could happen. Thirty-seven of those have been formerly given approval and have been completed, and they will be ready for this fall's municipal election. We have 10 partnerships that haven't yet received formal approval.

* (14:50)

We—I have met with a number of these partnerships. As you can understand, there were some that were very, very easy to move through and happened very quickly. There are some that have some glitches and some more challenges that needed more hard work. I do want to say that we, in the department, have assigned people to work in each of these partnerships. We had field officers who were resource people for each of these partnerships, and they did a lot of work getting progress made. I have met with a number of the partnerships. We—more than anything, though, the leadership on this came from local reeves, mayors and councillors who stepped up, and I understand—and they told me—they were not thrilled when we brought forward the announcement through the Throne Speech a year and a half ago.

Having said that, they understood that they needed to talk to their neighbours. They had organized meetings. They worked with our department. They sat around the tables and talked about what their area—they wanted it to look like. There was a lot of discussion that took place, and, because of that local leadership, I suspect that all 47 partnerships will be put in place and will be organized in time for the fall election.

Mr. Gerrard: I would ask the minister: What is the deadline for the amalgamation to be approved in order to be ready for the fall election?

Mr. Struthers: We're working very hard to get as many of these done because the next big signpost

along the way towards that election is May, where we have to make some decisions in terms of campaign financing. Those—there's certain logistical things that need to be put in place in order to actually run the election come this October. There's been discussions between these amalgamating partners about their campaign finance bylaws. They need to have a certain amount of time to have that done, so I'm—when I've been talking with each of these partnerships I've been talking in terms of having them in place in time to require—fulfill the requirements of the campaign finance time frame.

Mr. Gerrard: And what is the minister's plan if there is some partnerships which are not approved by May?

Mr. Struthers: My plan is to make sure that we do everything we can between now and then to make that number as small as we possibly can, and then by the end of this month I will then take a look if there are any—and I suspect there won't be, but if there are any, then I'll be sitting with them and we'll be working through an agreement with both sides of the issues together. If it's a three-way split, we'll meet three at a time. If it's a two-way split, we'll meet with the two councils that are dance partners in this amalgamation.

Mr. Gerrard: My question for the Minister responsible for the City of Winnipeg—and as the minister, I'm sure, is quite well aware, there's some thousands of homes which have had problems with frozen pipes coming to the home. And in at least one instance that I'm aware of, the pipes were just put in by the—in 2010, which is very recent, which tells me either that the codes are not adequate or the pipes were not put in according to code in order that they not freeze. What is the minister going to be doing to assess why we had so much of a problem with freezing and what has to be done to prevent this problem in the future?

* (15:00)

Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister responsible for relations with the City of Winnipeg within the Department of Municipal Government): Mr. Chair, I want to thank the member for the question. Of course, we all know the struggles that many families have been going through when it comes to frozen pipes. We should acknowledge, and I do want to say for the record, all of the people that have provided support to those families or their family members. I think everyone in the Chamber would know a family being affected by this.

We have been in discussion, of course, with the City of Winnipeg in terms of trying to provide any support necessary for that. You know, the Province does provide significant funding. There is unconditional funding that the City could use to prioritize. That funding would include \$52 million. We'll continue to work with the City as a provincial government to provide the supports that they need.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, my question was, very specifically, what is the minister doing, provincial responsibility for building codes, et cetera, to make sure that, you know, that we don't have this problem next year?

Mr. Chief: Yes, I just would re-highlight our point to the member opposite that, you know, that we are providing the core infrastructure funding to the City of Winnipeg unconditionally of \$52 million. It is, you know, the City of Winnipeg who can prioritize how to use those dollars. Certainly, if they were to prioritize, you know, ways in which to invest that could prevent this from happening again, you know, that is something, of course, the funding could be used for. We continue to have an open dialogue with the City on looking at their priorities. The role of our government is to give them the funding, which is one of the broadest and most generous in the country to a municipality. So those dollars are there. The City will utilize those dollars to prioritize.

We do look at the uniqueness of this situation and, you know, I can't speak on behalf of the City, other than to say that the—they got \$52 million in unconditional—if they wish to utilize those dollars in a way to prevent this in the future, they could do that.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, just in—if we have pipes which were put in only four years ago, and we do, which froze, there is a problem in that those pipes are going to freeze again next year if nothing is done. And part of the responsibility of the provincial government is for building codes, right? You know, some aspects may be delegated, but the fact is that it's not just a monetary responsibility that the Province has, that there is an oversight responsibility. And that oversight responsibility exists not just because it applies to the city of Winnipeg; there have been pipes in Carman and elsewhere.

And, you know, if we had a winter like this next year, we sure don't want to have thousands and thousands of homes with frozen pipes. So I think that it's a reasonable question. And I think it goes beyond just, you know, providing dollars, that there is an oversight role which is critical for the Province, and

I'm just wondering, you know, what the minister is doing about this.

Mr. Chief: I want to thank the member for the question. You know, I do want to let the member know that it is a very valid question. I don't want him to think that I don't think it is a valid question. We do—as it was said, we do provide the funding to the City of Winnipeg. You know, I want to re-highlight the fact of how unique this particular situation is. And the City uses those infrastructure dollars to prioritize where they think it's going to have the biggest impact in terms of making a difference in the city when it comes to core infrastructure.

We do recognize the uniqueness of the situation. And, because of the situation, maybe the City has to look at it and say, well, we're going to reprioritize some things. There are some things around code and looking at how that code is enforced. We do know that the City, you know, needs to look at that, if there are pipes that are freezing after four years, to enforce the code. If there are things, after an assessment's been done, on the uniqueness of the situation that come into our jurisdiction, one of the great things that we have is we have a great relationship with the City, and we'll—certain our officials and the City officials will work together. And if there's anything that we can collectively do to make sure this doesn't happen again, of course, we'll be supportive of that.

Mr. Eichler: I'd like to talk about the Taxicab Board of Manitoba. And I'd like to know the current board members and their terms that they've currently served and when they will be replaced, and the process that you go through to replace them.

*(15:10)

Mr. Chief: I'll provide the member with as much information as I can here today, and if there's some gaps in that, we'll make sure that we get the member the information he needs.

The members of the taxi board are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor. The terms are two 2-year terms. The chairman of the board is Mr. Bruce Buckley. Members of the board are Ms. Roxanne Dorvault. There is an elected official from the City of Winnipeg that sits on the board, Mr. Councillor Harvey Smith, as well as someone appointed through the Winnipeg Police Service, Mr. Lou Malo, and Ms. Lea Baturin. The term dates are two years, based on the stagger of each member. I'm not sure so we can provide that information at a later date.

Mr. Eichler: The—when was the last position appointment made to the members of the board? Was that a year ago or two years ago or when's the expiry for those terms coming up?

Mr. Chief: The latest appointment was Lea Baturin, who was added February 2014.

Mr. Eichler: I had a recent meeting with applicants that have asked to increase the number of units they have for people with disabilities, in particular those with wheelchair disabilities, and the application was turned down. Is there current numbers on wait times, and what is the criteria used to establish whether or not extra vehicles would be allowed to have that licence to increase the number of units to be available for picking up people with disabilities?

Mr. Chief: I'm familiar with the issue that the member brought up. Once again, if we—if he needs more information, we'll bring it to him.

The decisions about granting taxicab licences are made by the taxi board, which operates independent of government. Part of the board's mandate is to ensure the taxicab services are available to all Manitobans. The board heard from representatives from the industry and the community and will be making a decision on the request in the next couple of weeks or, I think, next two weeks.

So they continue to assess, you know, accessibility around, of course, all people in the city. We want to make sure that the taxi industry—the board wants to make sure that the taxi industry is not only safe but accessible for all Winnipeggers and Manitobans, and they continue to assess this to make sure that the necessary service is there for all people.

Mr. Eichler: In consultation with those that are wheelchair bound, I understand that wait times have been up to an hour, hour and a half for a vehicle to either pick them up or take them to a doctor appointment or return from a hospital appointment. Is that the type of information that's used by the Taxicab Board to make those decisions or is it by the number of units. Could the minister outline the criteria that's used to establish those?

Mr. Chief: I want to thank the member for the question. The taxi board, of course, would take into account things like wait times when it comes to their assessment criteria, accessibility. They would take into account the amount of licences that are granted to make sure that not only does everyone have accessible, safe and able to utilize and use it taxi, but to also make sure that there isn't too many licences

granted as well. So their assessment criteria does take a lot of different information and people do come and share their thoughts and ideas on their licensing. The board makes a decision based on that.

I do want to let the member opposite knows that we, of course, passed legislation to provide increased accessibility for people with disabilities on a whole number of fronts, so we're very aware of not only making sure that people with disabilities have access to taxicabs, but on a whole number of fronts throughout when they're getting services and resources from the public.

Mr. Eichler: In my conversations with some of the people that are wheelchair bound was telling me that one of the drivers said that they had one of their licences and their vehicles for sale because he was getting close to retirement. And they says, okay, and they said, so what is the process for disposing of that. And he says, well, I have a—it's a bit of a savings plan for me. I have \$150,000 I want to get for that licence and my vehicle.

* (15:20)

Is this the type of thing that would go through the Taxicab Board? Is there protections in place for the consumer in order to have this happen, or how does the process work for someone to dispose of a licence and a vehicle for someone with wheelchair accessibility—access to that type of a business?

Mr. Chief: Yes, I want to thank the member for the question. When it comes to wheelchair accessibility issues or transferring of licences, I do want to be clear that the decisions about granting taxicab licences are made by the Taxicab Board, which operates independently of government. Part of the board's mandate is to ensure that taxicab services are available to, of course, all Manitobans. The board heard from representatives, from—heard representatives of the industry and the community about making a decision, particularly around the area of wheelchair and accessibility, shortly. I do want to be clear the decisions about granting taxicab licences are made by the taxi board independent, of course, of our government. And when there was a similar issue arose a few years back, particularly around the issue, of course, around wheelchair and accessibility, the board did make a decision after hearing from members from the community—the board did make a decision to grant an additional 80 cab licences during the peak season, December to March, to make sure that there were more cabs that were available to all people.

Mr. Eichler: I'm going to come back to the board, and I know that the minister has a certain amount of data that's been collected, and when we look at the chair of the board, Mr. Buckley, we see that he has been removed as a professional duties roster just shortly. And do we—does the minister seem to think that it's appropriate to have a chair of the board that's just been suspended from those duties?

Mr. Chief: Mr. Chair, I want to thank the member for the question.

Mr. Bruce Buckley, I don't know if the member opposite knows him, has ever met him. What I can say is the time that I have known him and got to meet him and work with him, I do want to say that he's a very hard-working individual. I don't have any details. From what I understand, Mr. Bruce Buckley retired from his place of employment. But I do want to say, for the record, that he is a very hard-working person. We're lucky to have him as the chair with his skill set and his experience. And I do want to say that Mr. Buckley has also dedicated his career to working hard for Manitobans. And so at this point, I'm glad that he is carrying on with his duties. It's not an easy job, by any means, to chair that. There's lots of different, not so much issues, but there's lots of different priorities that come forward to the board. I know that he's done a good job there and I'm glad that he's going to be able to carry on and provide the role as chair for the Taxicab Board.

Mr. Eichler: Does the minister happen to know how much money Mr. Buckley donated to the NDP organization last year?

Mr. Chief: I'm not aware of any donations that Mr. Buckley made.

Mr. Eichler: I can help him out with that. I'll table it for him when I think the time is right.

On the Taxicab Board, do they do a feasibility study on the number of licences, and how is that determined?

Mr. Chief: I'd like to thank, of course, the member for the question.

I do want to highlight again, once again, I don't know if the member got it, but I know he can get it on Hansard, that there are—the members of the board, of course, include Bruce Buckley, but also include other hard-working members of our community, including an elected official from the City of Winnipeg, Harvey Smith.

Of course, we understand how important safety is, so we work with the Winnipeg Police Service to make sure that that represented on the board. So we also have a variety of experiences that, of course, are going to—that are going to provide the support to make sure that the taxi industry provides safe and reliable and accessible service to everybody.

We do know that depending on timing, depending on what's going on in the city, sometimes you got things, big events like the Junos, and after a period of time, in terms of how our population is growing, they do use feasibility studies, they do use an assessment, they do look at criteria, particularly when priorities of the industry itself brings forward.

But there are other groups that bring information forward, as you know, things like the—you know, our government making investments into the museum for human rights. You know, that's going to increase tourism, you know, when you build facilities like that. So they'll be looking at ways in which to maximize as we get more people coming to our province, coming to our city, making sure that we can maximize those things.

* (15:30)

So the board does, of course, take into account as much information as they can get actually from the community, people who utilize the service, members who provide the service, the business community. And they do take the time and invest into feasibility studies, evaluations to make sure that that service is accessible and safe. And that's why it's important that there is a diverse group of people who sit on the Taxicab Board.

Mr. Eichler: I believe the limousine business also falls under the parameters of the Taxicab Board, and I know that it used to be under MIT. What was the reason that it was moved over to the municipal ledger side of things instead of MIT?

Mr. Chief: I want to thank the member for the question. I think the decision was made for a couple different reasons. Of course, it was before my time and I'll certainly look back and talk to past ministers, whether it be the current minister of MIT or the current minister now of Sport, Culture, Heritage.

I would say that if you look at the representation on the board, that takes into a lot of different people: an elected official from the City of Winnipeg. It takes into account the Winnipeg Police Service. And because of the nature of the relationship between the

government and the City of Winnipeg, it allows us to continue to work very closely with them.

When you have the sort of investments that go on in places like the MTS Centre and you see this huge boom in the downtown, and often municipal government, particularly the City of Winnipeg, works with so many of these business—so many people in the business community.

I would say that it was a practical reason for why it happened. I can't say the exact reason, but I will—I'll follow up with the past ministers.

Mr. Eichler: In regards to the limousines and the regulations outlining those, I know I've met with them a number of times, and the requirements that's laid out through legislation, some of that legislation was outdated. Is the department prepared to look at modifications or changes in the legislation to bring it up to date with what's really happening in that business?

As we know, there's lots of different models that are out there, lots of opportunities to see that business grow and prosper within the province, but there seems to be roadblocks doing the types of things that—through the inspections that are not up to date in regards to what's happening in other parts of Canada and the United States.

Mr. Chief: I would reiterate something that I said earlier around we do know that when it comes to the taxi industry, we know that there is lots of different priorities that come up, and that's why it's important to note that the Taxicab Board does do feasibility studies to make sure that any type of new information coming forward based on new data, that they build that into their criteria and, of course, in terms of how they assess making sure that the taxi industry is safe and reliable and accessible to everybody based on those priorities. We know, of course, that when it comes to safety or maximizing the potential, whether it be a limousine service, we're always open to, of course, work with the Taxicab Board to take that into account.

When it comes to the different types of issues that come forward, if a recommendation was to come through on doing legislation that would maximize service for people, we're, of course, open to that.

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): I just want to welcome the minister to his role. I haven't had the opportunity to do that on the record yet, as the—I guess, I hate to refer myself—to myself as the critic for the city of Winnipeg, but more the advocate for

the city of Winnipeg. It doesn't sound very good being the critic for the city of Winnipeg. But I do have a few questions for the minister, and I know he did answer one of the questions today that I was actually going to ask, and it was asked by one of his colleagues in the House today, about the \$3.5-million projects for the city of Winnipeg.

I'm wondering if he could—is that the same as in the Estimates book? It has the Winnipeg Regeneration Strategy. Is that where the \$3.5 million come from, or is that separate?

Mr. Chief: Yes, the question that I took today was on—of course, as she heard, for support for recreation. The program she's talking about, the Winnipeg Regeneration Strategy, is a separate program from the program I actually talked about today in the House.

Mrs. Stefanson: So just going back to the program that was announced today in the House, how is that going to be managed? Is that going to be managed out of your office or is that managed by another outside person or organization?

Mr. Chief: So, the particular program that the member is talking about, the Winnipeg Community Infrastructure Program, is actually the intake and it is managed through municipal government.

Mrs. Stefanson: So does that \$3.5 million then go to the City of Winnipeg to manage?

* (15:40)

Mr. Chief: So the program, the Winnipeg Community Infrastructure Program, the intake is done through municipal government, so I just want to re-highlight that. The dollars will go to upgrade facilities all throughout Winnipeg. They could include, as I said today, soccer pitches and pools and arenas, outdoor facilities like bike paths, cultural facilities—cultural facilities. This would include organizations through community centres, through non-profit organizations. Some of these facilities can be city of Winnipeg facilities.

The supports, of course, go into place. We do recognize how important it is to upgrade many of these facilities. Thousands of families utilize them. We know that the programs like this do make a big difference. We, and as I've said, you know, we have to make sure that families have safe places to go to play, to participate. A lot of these facilities I think we all recognize. An example could be a curling rink. That curling rink would have been a rink that

someone like Jennifer Jones would have played on, so the facilities themselves can be non-profit based, can be City of Winnipeg based to upgrade, to make sure that we're providing the supports that that family utilize in their communities and their neighbourhoods every day.

Mrs. Stefanson: I wonder if the minister could indicate what criteria will be used for the allocation of these funds. How will the decisions be made in terms of where the money goes and what communities and whether or not it's a curling rink or a soccer pitch and how you choose one or the other? What is the criteria that will be used in allocating these funds?

Mr. Chief: As the member knows, when you have a program like this, they're very popular because there is a lot of need out there for upgrades to facilities. I do want to say for the record that often these choices we make are difficult. They are often based on neighbourhood or community need. We do take into account things like making sure that these facilities are accessible to all people that come from the variety of different backgrounds. You take into account can the upgrades provide a safer place to facilities. Many could also take into account the demographic of an area. Often we see, you know, facilities being over-utilized because of the amount of young people or families utilizing that, the impact that comes up. The overall criteria, though, I do want to let the member know that, as part of the application process, that will be part, and it will be made public on the website. I just wanted to make sure that I was able to give some information here in Estimates.

Mrs. Stefanson: So when will that be made public on the website?

Mr. Chief: I believe that it's—I believe it's live, actually, right now. I think it is on the website now.

Mrs. Stefanson: Can the minister just indicate where I would find this \$3.5 million in this Estimates book?

Mr. Chief: So the information would be on page 66 under the heading of the Building Manitoba Fund, and the line would be Municipal Infrastructure Assistance.

Mrs. Stefanson: Okay. Just while I have a look at that, can you give me an indication of what the total size of the budget is? This is obviously \$3.5 million for this year, and so what is your total estimated

expenditure for other initiatives such as these in the city of Winnipeg?

* (15:50)

Mr. Chief: So this is a—for the member opposite, this is a three-year program. It's \$7.5 million in total; \$3.4 million was committed—of that was committed last year to 91 projects, which leaves a total of \$4.1 million remaining.

Mrs. Stefanson: So \$3.4 million was committed last year, but it's being paid for in this year's budget. Is that correct?

Mr. Chief: So, out of the \$3.4 million, out of the 91 projects that were committed—that was committed to last year, not all of those projects are completed, so some of the projects can be based over one or two years.

Mrs. Stefanson: Could I get a list of those 91 projects and how much is allocated for each project, as well as which projects have been completed and which are ongoing and the terms of those projects, as well, for completion?

Mr. Chief: As the member probably knows, we don't have all that information here with us, but I'll work to get her the information she requested.

Mrs. Stefanson: I want to thank the minister for that. So if we could get that in a timely manner—when do you think you get that to me, by the end of the week or?

Mr. Chief: Well, I don't think we can get it by the end of the week, because the end of the week is tomorrow. But we'll work to get it to her as soon as we possibly can for sure.

Mrs. Stefanson: Okay, well, hopefully, the minister—and I'll just ask him this—will he be able to get that to me by the end of next week?

Mr. Chief: We do think we should be able to get that to the member before the end of next week.

Mrs. Stefanson: And so just going back to the \$3.5 million from the announcement today, could I have a list of what projects that money is for, as well?

Mr. Chief: We wouldn't have that information. That's currently what—we did the announcement to let people know to—that they could apply. So we're currently taking applications in at this—right now. So we don't actually have that information because people are currently applying for it.

Mrs. Stefanson: Is that \$3.5 million—is that expected to be spent this fiscal year on those projects? So what is the timing of accepting projects? What's the deadline for the acceptance of projects?

Mr. Chief: So the actual application deadline is on the website. It says May 16th is the application deadline. Because of it being an application process and people applying for money, we can't predict how much they're going to apply for. It might be based over multiple years. There—the projects do have to be completed by March 31st of 2016.

I do want to let the member know that it is an incredibly popular program. Many non-profit community organizations, cultural groups, many people apply to get their facilities upgraded for a variety of reasons. So we do know it's a very popular program and—but the actual application deadline is May 16th with all projects, even the ones that are multi-year, that they're completed by March 31st of 2016.

Mrs. Stefanson: So is that \$3.5 million that is allocated for these projects—is that over multi-years, or is that just what is going to be allocated this year to go towards those projects? And, if there's ongoing contracts, if they're not going to be completed until later, is it the minister's understanding that there'll be more money allocated next year and the year after to complete those projects, or is this a total number for all projects that he's announced?

* (16:00)

Mr. Chief: So the \$3.5 million is committed for the intake this year based on the type of project it is, whether it's a one-year, or two-year, multi-year project, is cash flowed when the project is complete.

Mrs. Stefanson: So it's—so the minister is expecting to expend the \$3.5 million for this year, regardless if an individual project extends into another year?

Mr. Chief: So the money, the \$3.5 million, doesn't have to be spent this year, depending on the project being based over one or two years, but as long as the projects are completed by March 31st, 2016.

Mrs. Stefanson: So it's \$3.5 million total, then, regardless of how long. So some of it could be, if maybe there's only—if projects are not quite completed this year, for whatever is expended this year—so say it's \$3 million this year but there's still more ongoing projects, does that mean the other—it's 3.5 total, regardless of how many years then?

Mr. Chief: Okay, I hope I'm sort of giving the member opposite the information that she's getting—that she's requesting.

So the total project is \$7.5 million over three years. The current intake is \$3.5 million at the current intake, and, as long as the projects are complete by March 31st of 2016, that is the criteria that we set.

Mrs. Stefanson: Okay. So—but the \$7.5 million, 3.4 of that was committed from last year, as I understand that the minister said; 3.5 is committed this year. There's a \$7.5 million total to be completed by 2016. So there's another \$600,000 left there in this total. Where is that going?

Mr. Chief: So the remainder, the \$600,000, so there could be—there could potentially be another intake of applications. That's one way that we could look at the total \$7.5 million.

Mrs. Stefanson: In the—and the minister said that this came under the Building Manitoba Fund under Municipal Infrastructure Assistance. Is that 'acorrect'—is that correct?

Mr. Chief: Yes, page 66, Building Manitoba Fund, under the line Municipal Infrastructure Assistance.

Mrs. Stefanson: So total municipal infrastructure assistance is estimated to be at just under \$277 million, estimated to be expended this year. So how much of that is being allocated to the City of Winnipeg?

Mr. Chief: So the commitment level for the City of Winnipeg is \$204.5 million under the Building Manitoba Fund.

Mrs. Stefanson: And so the minister said that the \$7.5 million is included in that. Where is the rest of the money going or where is the rest of the money being allocated? Can I get a breakdown of that?

*(16:10)

Mr. Chief: So I'll give the member a breakdown here. So there's \$52 million—just over \$52 million in general assistance. It's unconditional that the City could use for their priorities. We were able to also, under the Building Manitoba Fund, make a historic announcement on roads. I do want to say that that historic announcement in terms of—for roads is not only to fix the potholes and upgrade, but to—when streets are in complete disrepair, to help rebuild them. We were working and are working with, of course, the City of Winnipeg, Manitoba Heavy

Construction, CAA, to get not only a record amount of investment into those roads, but also make sure that there's a record amount of work that's going into Winnipeg streets as well. In fact, there's going to be over 100 projects starting as early as this spring, and when we talk to the City and heavy construction and others, they do tell us that they have the capacity to get a record amount of work done.

I do want to highlight that, as part of the Building Manitoba Fund, also our commitment to transit is the most generous contribution between a provincial and a municipality in the nation, and it's actually protected in legislation, that commitment. Also, the investments into recreation. There are also investments—breakdown into—in terms of residential sewer backup program, waste water treatment, commitment to the Winnipeg Convention Centre. There is also commitments through the Manitoba-Winnipeg infrastructure agreement project. So that's generally the breakdown for the Building Manitoba Fund.

Mrs. Stefanson: I'm wondering if the minister would give me a breakdown in terms of the dollars that are estimated to be expended in those areas that he mentioned.

Mr. Chief: Okay. I'll read onto the record here the Building Manitoba Fund, the breakdown is transit, \$46.9 million; general assistance, \$52.1 million; recreation, \$2.6 million; roads, \$40.1 million; other capital grants, \$62.8 million. The subtotal of that would be \$204.5 million.

Police and public safety, \$34.8 million; and, in other supports, \$56.2 million, total being \$295.5 million.

Mrs. Stefanson: I'm just wondering if the minister can indicate—now he said \$46.9 million is allocated to transit, but there's another in the Estimates book under the Municipal Infrastructure Assistance, it says there, Transit Operating Support of \$36.8 million. So is this just—is this transit under the Municipal Infrastructure Assistance? And then there's another amount in the sum of \$36.8 million going to transit as well?

Mr. Chief: I just want to make sure that I clarify something from her—from the member's previous question. The Building Manitoba Fund totals \$204.5 million. I did add, as part of the operating grants, it is not part of the Building Manitoba Fund. The \$34.8 million is part of police and public safety and other supports, so the total is 295.5. But I want

to be clear that 204 is part of the Building Manitoba Fund. The police, public safety and other supports come from an operating grant. So I just want to make sure that the member—just so I clarified that for the member.

The difference, in terms of her current question, the difference is \$36.8 million—is for operating, and the other part of it is capital.

Mrs. Stefanson: And I want to thank the minister for clarifying that and for clarifying the other as well.

And so, if it is an operating grant, the other sum of money over and above the \$204.5 million, where is that money coming from? What government department—or where can I find that in the Estimates books?

* (16:20)

Mr. Chief: So, on page 66, the Transit Operating Support, the thirty-six, eight, five, the capital difference would be found in the Municipal Infrastructure Assistance out of the 276,642.

Mrs. Stefanson: Okay, so I'm still trying to figure out where the rest—so the difference between the 295.5 and the \$204.5 million, where is that—oh, is—where is that coming—oh, so is that—sorry, could you just clarify where that's coming from, the difference between the two?

Mr. Chief: So I think what the member's asking for is the difference between the 204.5 and the 295. So she's asking about the operating grants, which, you know, I said was police and public safety as well as other supports. So, on page 67, she would find some of that—some of those dollars on page 67 under the City of Winnipeg and Other Municipalities. But some of that is actually found in other departments as well.

Mrs. Stefanson: Right, I appreciate that. And so I—what other departments, and what are the allocations that are coming from other departments? And how does that money flow? Does it flow directly from those departments to pay for these services or capital projects? How does that work?

Mr. Chief: So the operating dollars that are not found in the City of Winnipeg—49,195—can be found in the Department of Health for two particular—one for ambulance services; that goes from Health. And also for—also in the Department of Health is mosquito larviciding in—due to the West Nile virus.

Mrs. Stefanson: Okay, and I wonder, can the minister indicate of the \$295.5 million, how much is being transferred from other government departments to pay for that? If—and which departments and what is the breakdown?

Mr. Chief: So the breakdown is—the other departments—and I'm going to have to—I didn't—want to clarify again. So the one department I mentioned, it's \$6.2 million from Health, but there's also \$2 million that comes from the Department of Culture as well.

Mrs. Stefanson: So, in the operating grants for police and public safety, does—no money comes from Justice for that?

* (16:30)

Mr. Chief: No, it comes from our department.

Mrs. Stefanson: As part of the Building Manitoba Fund, the minister mentioned that other capital grants in the sum of \$62 million, I believe, he mentioned, will be expended or estimated to be expended this year.

Is there a breakdown of what those expenditures are, and is this—is the \$7.5 million that we discussed early a part of that?

Mr. Chief: So the other capital grants that the dollars are used for is under the—is Manitoba-Winnipeg infrastructure agreement, the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund, the Green Infrastructure Fund, as well as support to the residential sewer backup program, the waste water treatment, and Winnipeg Convention Centre.

Report

Mr. Mohinder Saran (Chairperson of the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 254):

Mr. Chairperson, in the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 254, considering the Estimates of the Department of Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) moved the following motion: that the amendment be amended to replace \$10 with \$5.

Mr. Chairperson, this motion was defeated on a voice vote. Subsequently, two members requested that a counted vote be taken on this matter.

Mr. Chairperson: A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

All sections in Chamber for recorded vote.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please.

In this section of the Committee of Supply, meeting in room 254, considering the Estimates of the Department of Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, the honourable minister—the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) moved the following subamendment: that the amendment be amended to replace \$10 with \$5.

The subamendment was defeated on a voice vote, and, subsequently, two members requested a formal vote on this matter.

The question before the committee, then, is the subamendment of the honourable member for Emerson.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 18, Nays 29.

Mr. Chairperson: The subamendment is accordingly defeated.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being after 5 p.m., committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Tom Nevakshonoff): This House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 16, 2014

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